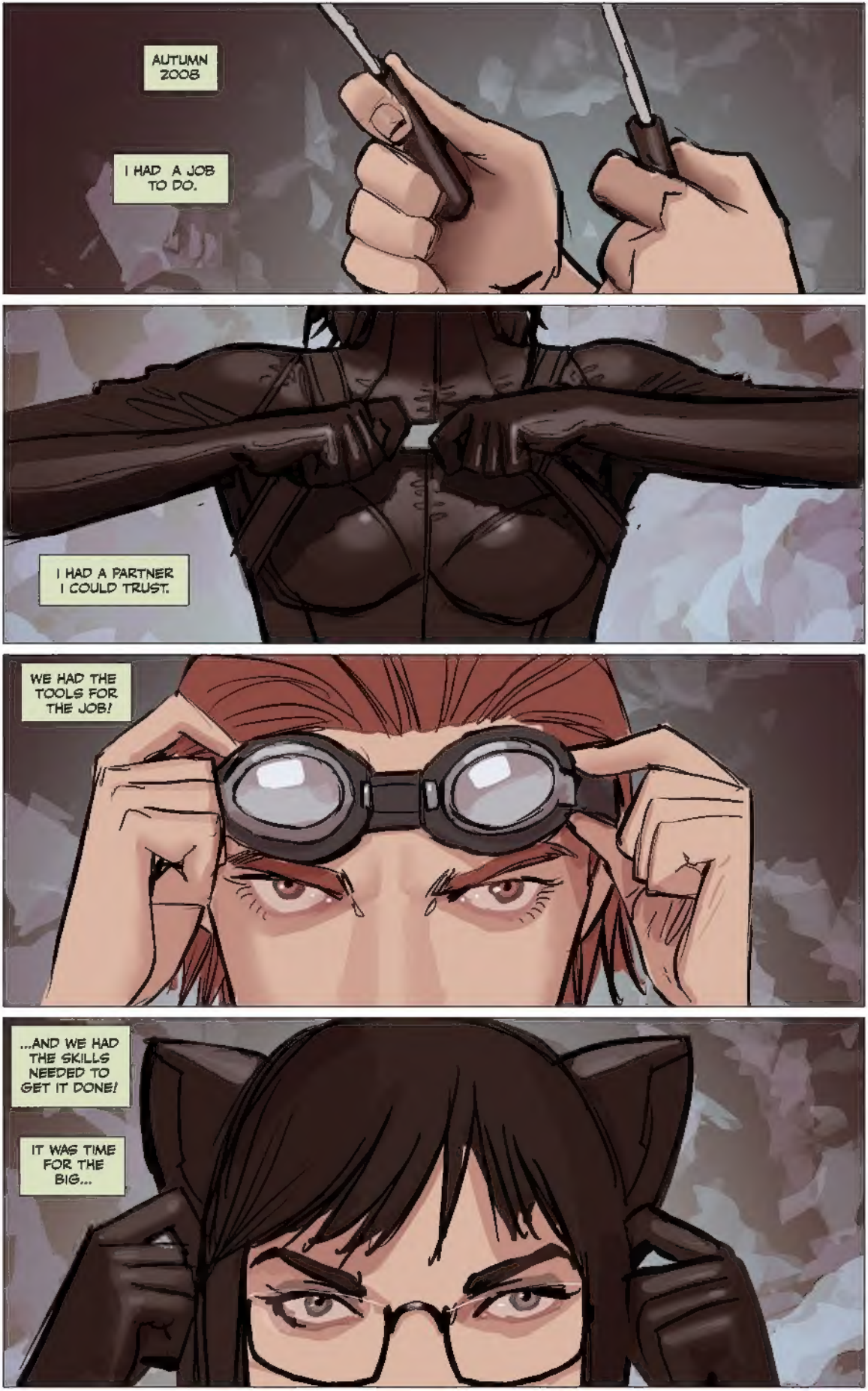
Sunstone
Mercy


AUTUMN 2008
I HAD A JOB TO DO.
I HAD A PARTNER I COULD TRUST.
WE HAD THE TOOLS FOR THE JOB!
...AND WE HAD THE SKILLS NEEDED TO GET IT DONE!
IT WAS TIME FOR THE BIG...

HEIST

READY?
NOPE. BUT I'M IN IT TILL THE END!
THE OLD FAMILIAR BUILDING LOOMED OMINOUSLY ABOVE US. ON ANY GIVEN DAY, IT WAS A MUNDANE PLACE BUT ON THAT DAY, WE CAME LOOKING TO RATTLE THE SKELETONS IN ITS CLOSET. BECAUSE OF THAT, THE PLACE FELT SIGNIFICANTLY MORE DANGEROUS.

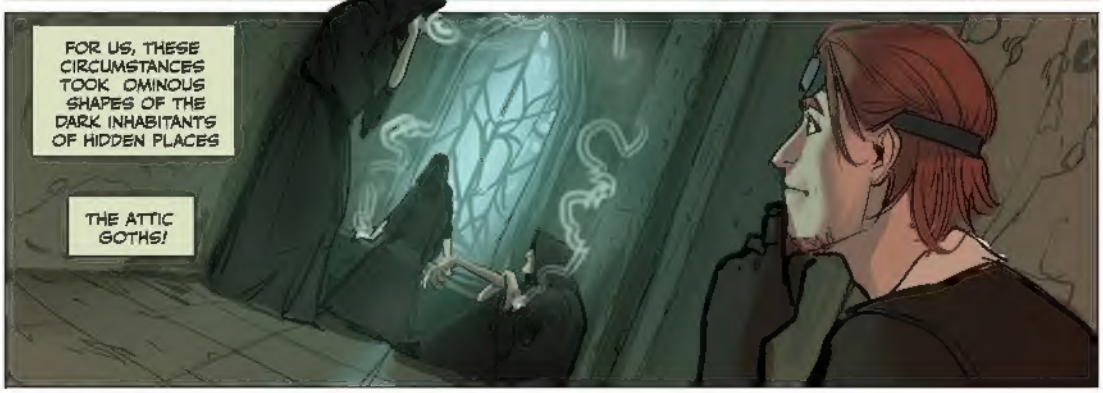
STILL, WE STUCK TO OUR PLANS AND KEPT A LOW PROFILE. AFTER ALL, THE LOST SOULS THAT WANDER THESE HALLS WERE USED TO OTHERS LIKE THEM. THEY WOULD IGNORE YOU IF YOU ATTRACTED LITTLE ATTENTION.

BUT IN THE HIGHER FLOORS MORE VIGILANT GUARDIANS KEPT THINGS IN ORDER.

THE JANITAUR!
ANCIENT AND TERRIFYING THE LUMBERING BEAST TENDED TO THE MACHINERY THAT KEPT THE WHOLE PLACE RUNNING
WE THOUGHT IT PRUDENT NOT TO DISTURB HIM SO WE DID AS THIEVES DO AND KEPT TO THE SHADOWS WITH OUR EYES ON THE PRIZE

THE UPPED FLOORS WERE EMPTY AT THE TIME. WE CHOSE THE HOUR OF OUR DEED WELL. RESEARCHED IT ALL BEFOREHAND...

BUT EVEN SO, EVERY PLAN IS INEVITABLY TESTED BY THE CIRCUMSTANCES


FOR US, THESE CIRCUMSTANCES TOOK OMINOUS SHAPES OF THE DARK INHABITANTS OF HIDDEN PLACES
THE ATTIC GOTHS!

STILL, THE ABILITY TO IMPROVISE IS THE FIRST SKILL MASTERED BY ANY GOOD DOM!
WHAT DO YOU MEAN THE JANITAUR IS GOING TO THE ATTIC? I WAS GONNA GO THERE AND RELAX FOR A BIT
DAMN IT!

IT IS AN AGE OLD RULE. TO SCARE A MONSTER YOU NEED A BIGGER MONSTER. ALL WE NEEDED TO DO IS WAIT FOR THE AIR TO CLEAR...
...AND ONCE BOTH THE UNWANTED COMPANY AND THEIR SMOKE WAS GONE...

THE PRIZE WAS OURS FOR THE TAKING
THE LOCK LOOKS ANCIENT AND COMPLEX... YOU SURE YOU GOT THIS?

AS LONG AS YOU KEEP ANY UNWANTED VISITORS AWAY, I GOT THIS!
OKAY THEN! GET TO IT!

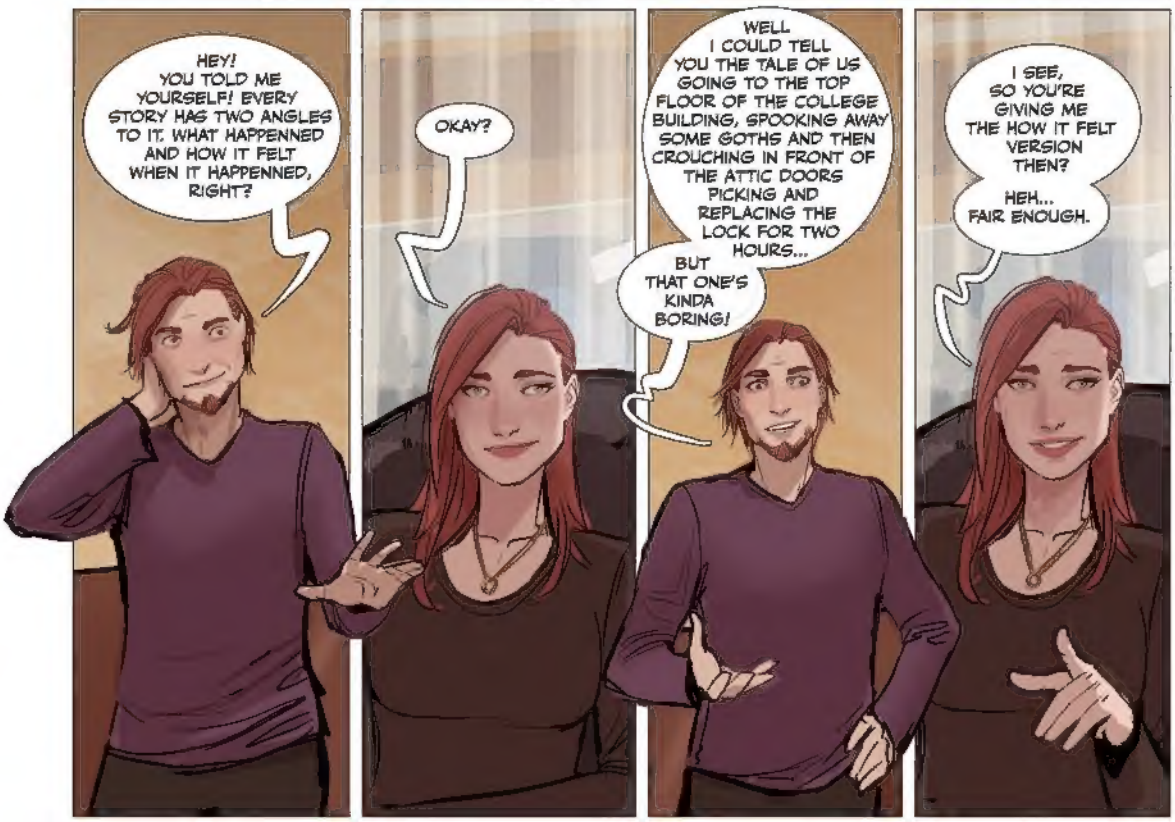
AND SO FOR HOURS BATTLED THE STRANGE ANCIENT MAGICS THAT HELD THE OLD DOORS SHUT, WHILE ALLY DID HER BEST TO KEEP THE RAPTORS AWAY

HOLD UP! FUCKING RAPTORS!?!?!
KA-TLACK
SSSSHH! I'M TELLING THE STORY HERE.
FINALLY WITH A DEXTROUS TWIST I FELT THE LOCK'S ELDRITCH SPELL GIVING WAY TO US

AND NOT A MOMENT TOO SOON AS THE RAPTORS MULTIPLIED AND THREATENED TO DROWN US IN A MURDEROUS FLURRY OF TEETH AND CLAWS.

THE PRIZE, ALL OF THE HIDDEN TREASURES OF THE ANCIENT MANOR'S ATTIC WERE OURS FOR THE TAKING AND...

ALAN, THE FUCK ARE YOU DOING?


HEY! YOU TOLD ME YOURSELF! EVERY STORY HAS TWO ANGLES TO IT, WHAT HAPPENNED AND HOW IT FELT WHEN IT HAPPENNED, RIGHT?
OKAY?
WELL I COULD TELL YOU THE TALE OF US GOING TO THE TOP FLOOR OF THE COLLEGE BUILDING, SPOOKING AWAY SOME GOTHS AND THEN CROUCHING IN FRONT OF THE ATTIC DOORS PICKING AND REPLACING THE LOCK FOR TWO HOURS...
BUT THAT ONE'S KINDA BORING!
I SEE, SO YOU'RE GIVING ME THE HOW IT FELT VERSION THEN?
HEH... FAIR ENOUGH.

EXACTLY! I MEAN YOU KNOW THIS STUFF BETTER THAN ANYONE, *LISUX!* THIS WAS AN IMPORTANT MOMENTOF OUR PAST AND I FELT IT NEEDEDA CERTAIN AMOUNT OF GRAVITAS...
SO ANYWAYS, BACK TO MY STORY! WE BROKE INTO THE ATTIC BUT THEN REALIZED JUST HOW DUSTY THE PLACE IS SO WE KNEW WHAT WE HAD TO DO!

CLEAN UP!!!

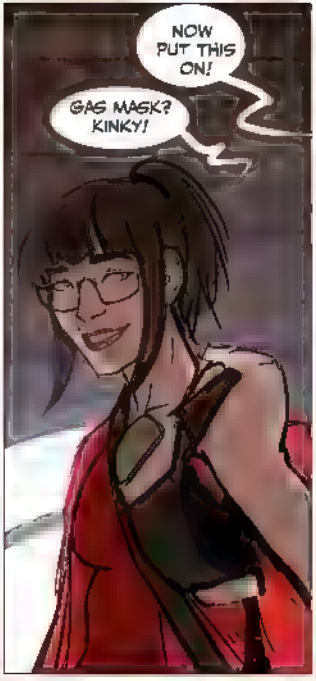
OH FOR FUCKS SAKE!

OKAY, ALL JOKING ASIDE, IT WAS HARDLY A GLAMUROUS OR BOMBASTIC THING BUT TRUTH WAS, THE PLACE WAS OURS, AND IT NEEDED A LOT OF CLEANUP BEFORE IT WAS IN ANY WAY SUITABLE FOR WHAT WE HAD IN MIND.

SO NATURALLY WE STARTED SMUGGLING IN CLEANING SUPPLIES
MORNIN'
MORNIN'
COULDN'T FIND A NEON JACKET?
COULDN'T DEAL WITH ALL THE SUN INSIDE THE BUILDING?
I'M GOING FOR INCONSPICUOUS
JUST... ACT CASUAL!

DUDE, I'VE SEEN A GUY CARRY A STUFFED PARROT AROUND THESE HALLS ONCE. NOBODY CARES
SIGH... FINE.
LET'S JUST HURRY!

CAUSE I WANNA GET THIS STARTED!



NOT REALLY. I BORROWED THESE FROM WORK. TRUST ME, YOU DON'T WANNA BREATHE IN OLD DUST AND SINCE A VACUUM CLEANER IS OUT OF THE QUESTION AS WELL, WE GOTTA MAKE THE BEST OF IT

AND WE DID JUST THAT

KHH-KHH

ALAN

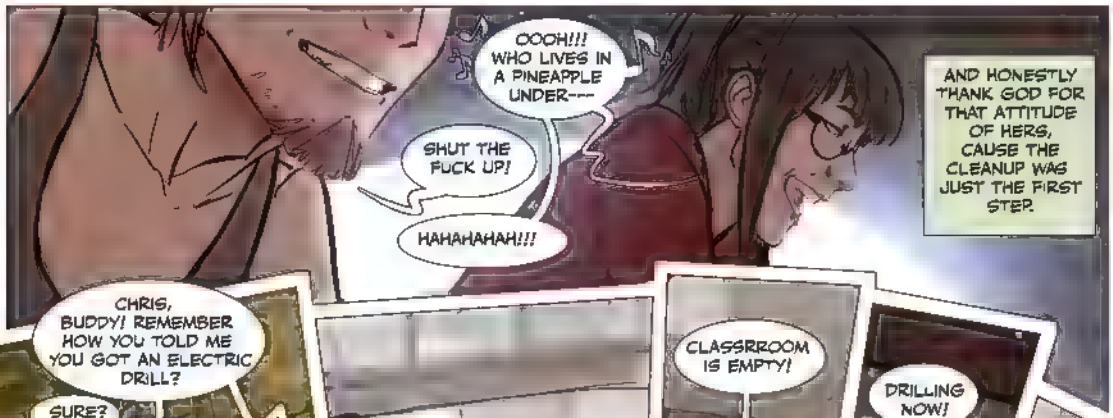
WE MADE THE BEST OF IT.

KHHH

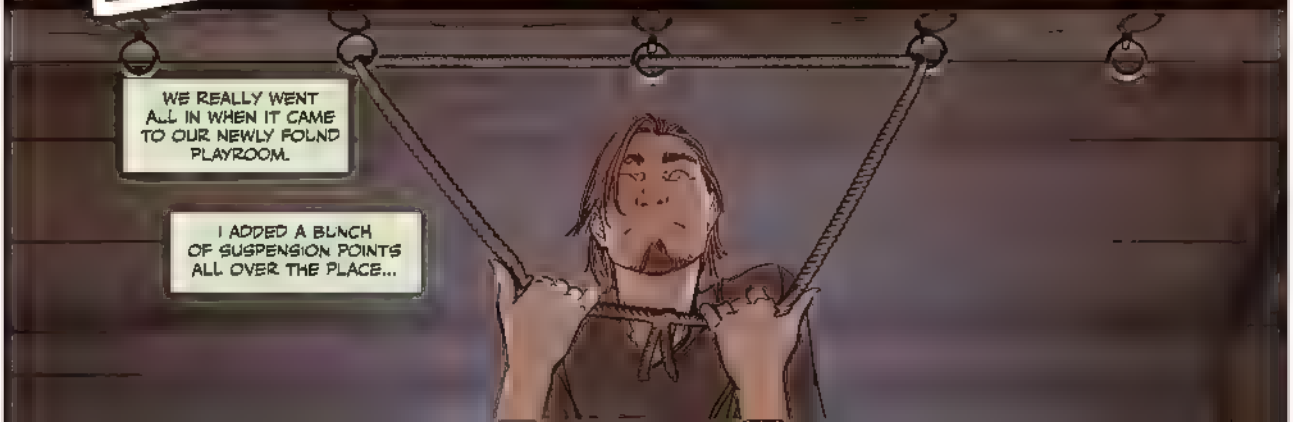
I AM YOUR DADDY!

GOD FUCKING DAMN IT, ALLY!

BUT THAT WAS THE THING WITH ALLY. IT WAS EASY TO MAKE THE BEST OF ANY SITUATION WITH HER AROUND
PUT YER BACK INTO IT YA FILTHY LAND LUBBER!
AYE AYE CAP'N!


OOOH!!! WHO LIVES IN A PINEAPPLE UNDER---
SHUT THE FUCK UP!
HAHAHAHAH!!!
AND HONESTLY THANK GOD FOR THAT ATTITUDE OF HERS, CAUSE THE CLEANUP WAS JUST THE FIRST STEP.

CHRIS, BUDDY! REMEMBER HOW YOU TOLD ME YOU GOT AN ELECTRIC DRILL?
SURE?
CAN I BORROW IT FOR A DAY?
CLASSRROOM IS EMPTY!
DRILLING NOW!
DAMN, ALAN. BUY HER A DINNER FIRST!


WE REALLY WENT ALL IN WHEN IT CAME TO OUR NEWLY FOUND PLAYROOM.
I ADDED A BUNCH OF SUSPENSION POINTS ALL OVER THE PLACE...

RUMMAGED FOR HOURS THROUGH OLD DISCARDED FURNITURE AND EQUIPMENT FOR BONDAGE USEFUL STUFF

ORGANIZED EVERYTHING...

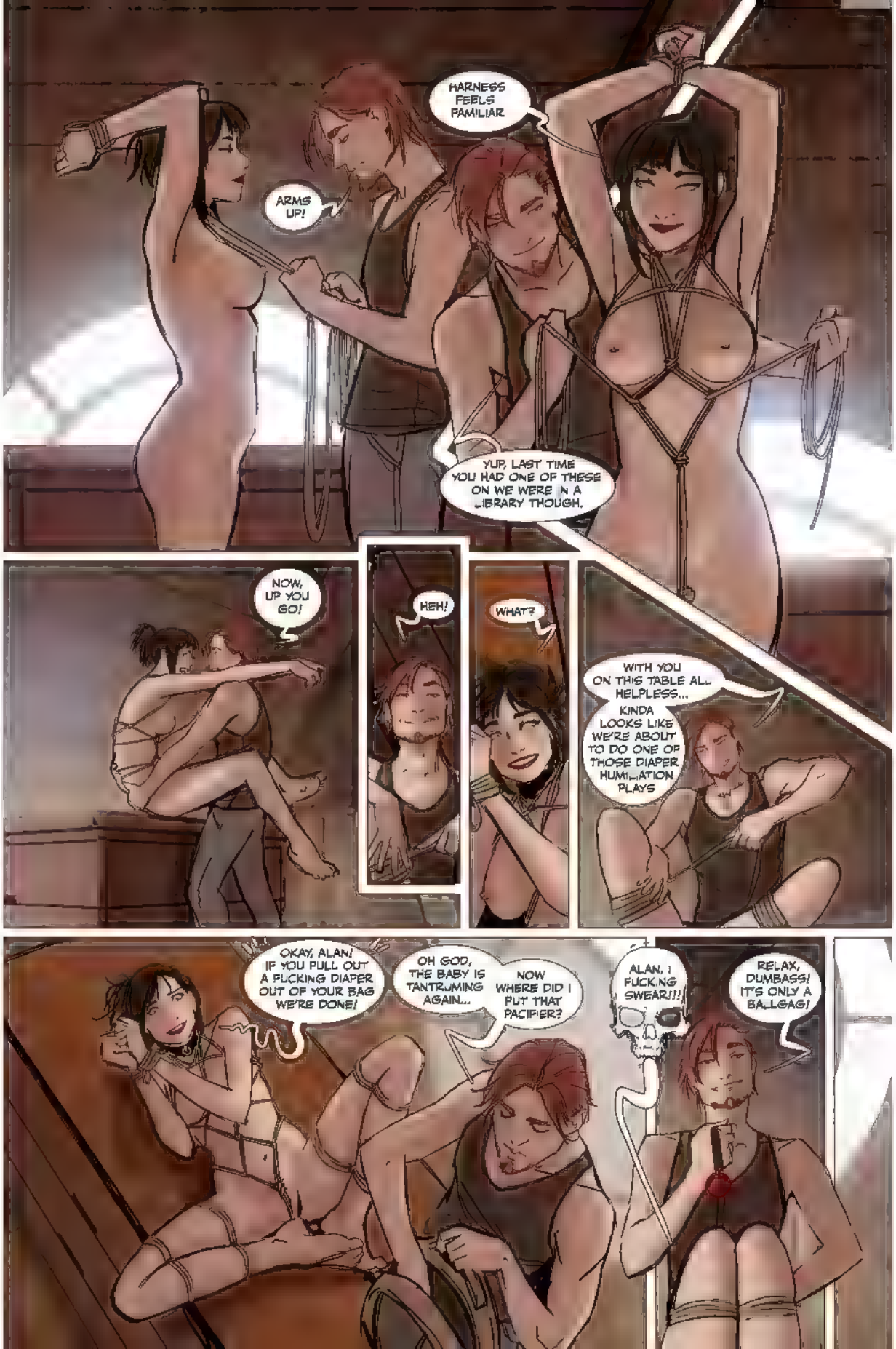
THE WHOLE THING TOOK US OVER A WEEK, BUT IN THE END, OUR WORK WAS FINALLY DONE...

AND THEN, THAT COMING MONDAY... IT WAS PLAY TIME
YOU GOING OR WHAT?
HELL YEAH! LET'S GO!
SLAM
YOU SURE ARE EAGER TO GET TO COLLEGE TODAY
SOME SPECIAL REASON?
CAN'T SAY!

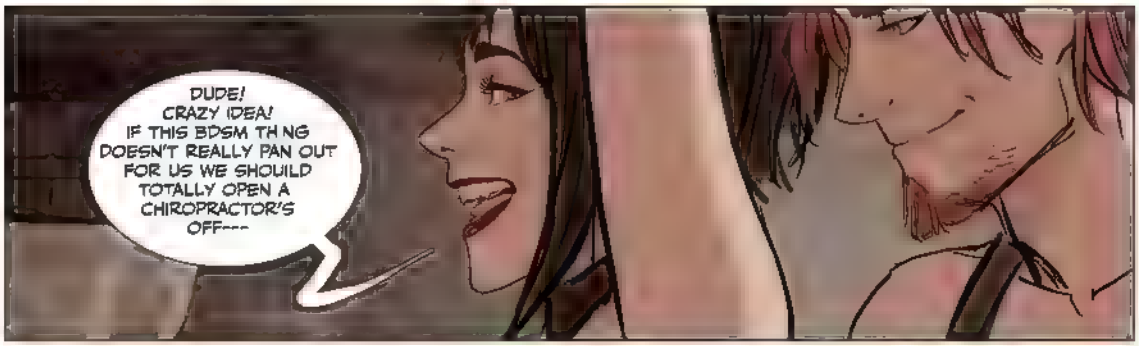
IT'S A SECRET!

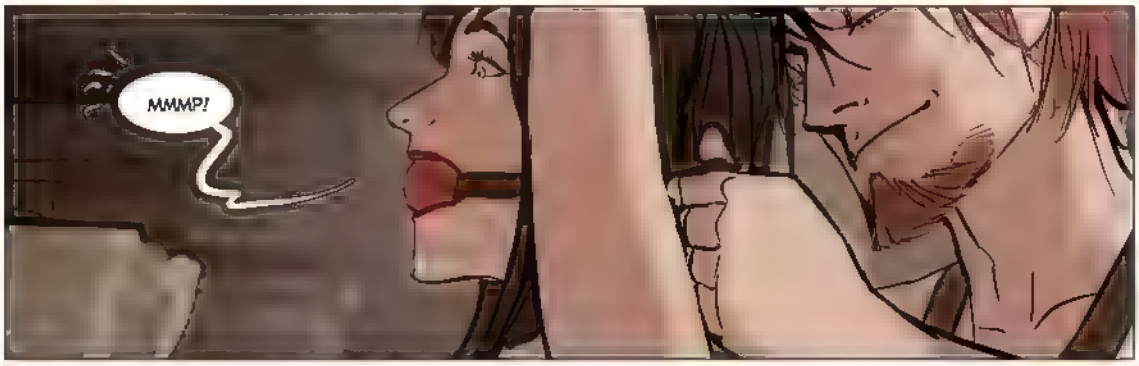
THE HOURS DRAGGED THAT DAY, WE DID OUR RESEARCH BEFFOREHAND. FIGURE OUT A SCHEDULE WHEN OUR FREE TIMES ALIGNED WITH THE CLASSROOM BENEATH US BEING EMPTY. SURE, ITWAS AN OLD BUILDING WITH THICK WALLS, BUT WHY RISK IT.
I GOT TO THE ATTIC FIRST THAT DAY. IT WAS ONLY APPROPRIATE FOR THE DOM TO ARRIVE EARLY. AFTER ALL, HAD A SCENE TO SET.
AND THERE WASN'T MUCH TIME CAUSE SHE TOO WAS ON HER WAY.
... SHE HAD HIGH EXPECTATIONS. .
AND I WAS DAMNED IF I WAS GONNA DISAPPOINT HER.
WELL, HELLO THERE MISTER!

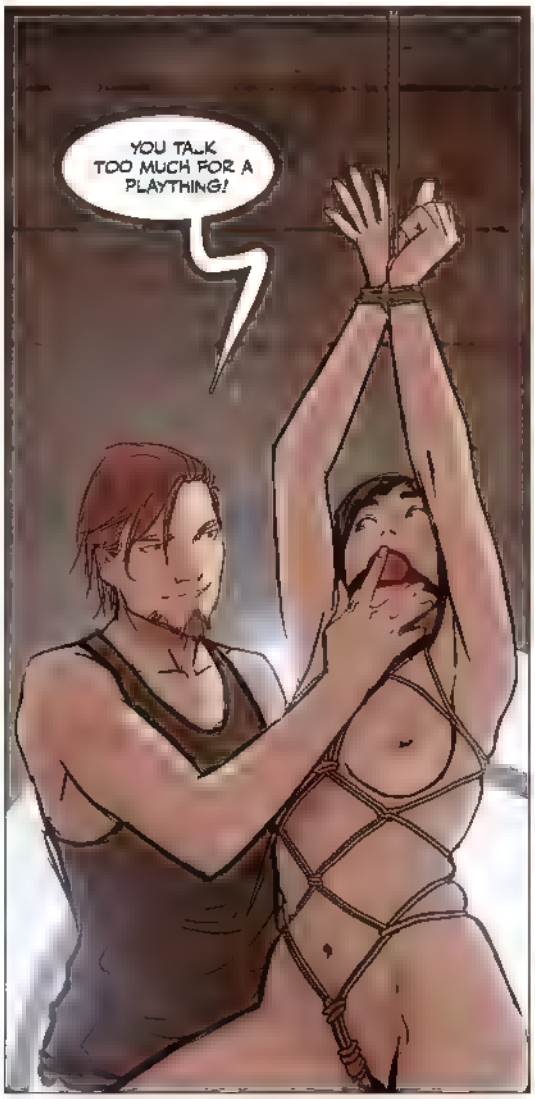
OOOH WHAT'S WITH ALL THE ROPES?
YOU'RE LATE!
YEAH, DUDE, SORRY BOUT THAT. TOOK ME TWO FLIGHTS OF STAIRS BEFORE I REALIZED I WAS HOLDING ONTO THE RAILING
THEN IT HIT ME I'D PROBABLY BE HANDLING YOUR DICK SOON AND I'M NO GERMOPHOBE BUT STILL... HAD TO WASH MY HANDS JUST IN CASE.
BASIC HYGIENE AND ALL THAT
APPRECIATED.
YOU'RE STILL LATE
AAAAH...
WELL, SHIT! GUESS I'M GONNA HAVE TO TAKE MY PUNISHMENT THEN! AREN'T I?
YUP! NOW GIVE ME YOUR HANDS!
YOU MEAN MY FRESHLY WASHED HANDS, MASTER?
WISEASS!

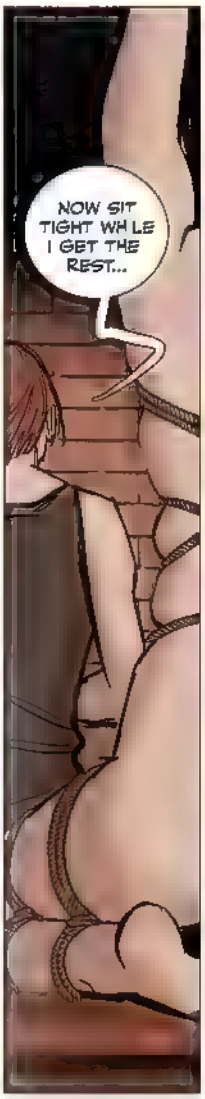

HARNESS FEELS FAMILIAR
ARMS UP!
YUP, LAST TIME YOU HAD ONE OF THESE ON WE WERE IN A LIBRARY THOUGH.
NOW, UP YOU GO!
HEH!
WHAT?
WITH YOU ON THIS TABLE ALL HELPLESS...
KINDA LOOKS LIKE WE'RE ABOUT TO DO ONE OF THOSE DIAPER HUMILIATION PLAYS
OKAY, ALAN! IF YOU PULL OUT A FUCKING DIAPER OUT OF YOUR BAG WE'RE DONE!
OH GOD, THE BABY IS TANTRUMING AGAIN...
NOW WHERE DID I PUT THAT PACIFIER?
ALAN, I FUCKING SWEAR!!!
RELAX, DUMBASS! IT'S ONLY A BALLGAG!

WAIT, YOU REALLY THOUGHT I WAS GONNA PULL OUT A DIAPER?
HEY, YOU SAID IT LOOKED LIKE CHANGING A BABY. IT KINDA FELT LIKE A SETUP FOR A GAME!
I'M NOT INTO THAT, AND YOU BETTER FUCKING BELIEVE I'D ASK FIRST IF YOU WERE.
BY THE WAY, NOTHING BITING IN TOO STRONGLY?
I MEAN THAT'S KINDA THE POINT HEH, BUT NO, WE'RE GOOD
MASTER
JUST CHECKING CAUSE WHAT I DO NEXT WILL RAISE OUR SHOULDERS AND IT'S SUPPOSED TO MAKE SOME KNOTS DIG IN
HOW BOUT NOW?
OOOOH! Y-YEAH! NOW IT'S GETTING IN THERE!
TOO MUCH?
NO, BUT I JUST FELT MY SPINE POP AND IT FEELS GREAT!


DUDE! CRAZY IDEA! IF THIS BDSM TH NG DOESN'T REALLY PAN OUT FOR US WE SHOULD TOTALLY OPEN A CHIROPRACTOR'S OFF---


MMMP!


YOU TA..K TOO MUCH FOR A PLAYTHING!


NOW SIT TIGHT WH LE I GET THE REST...

OF..

WOW

MEWFE!!!
MEWF---
!
MERCY!?
HOLD ON!
MWAH!
HEY, YOU OKAY?
MY--- MY LEGS ARE GOING NUMB!
SHIT! I'M ON IT.
BETTER?
GOD YES.

YOU KNOW HOW IN MY ROOM WE WERE ALWAYS KINDA VERY CLOSE TO EACH OTHER, WHAT WITH THE LACK OF SPACE AND ALL

YEAH?

WELL... I GOT TO TAKE A STEP BACK AND JUST... SEE THE BIG PICTURE, THE ACTUAL BEAUTY OF IT ALL. MY SLOPPPY KNOTS ASIDE, YOU WERE... GORGEOUS

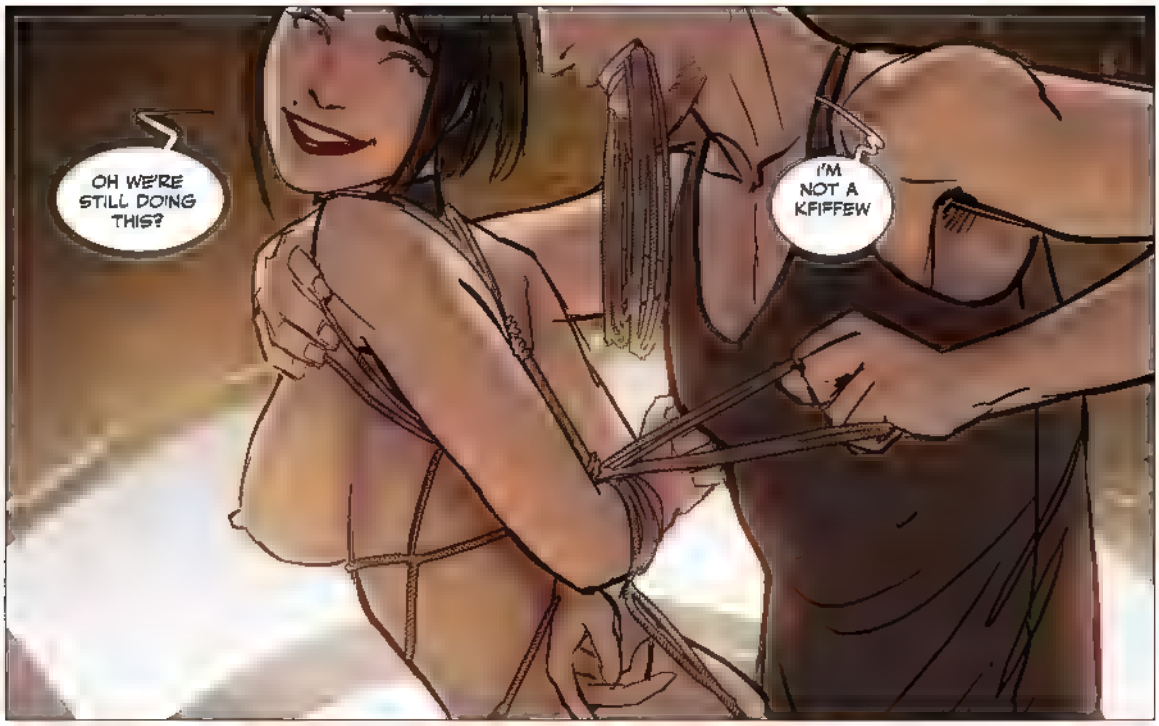
KNOW IT'S NOT VERY DOMMY TO SAY THAT BUT IT'S THE TRUTH.

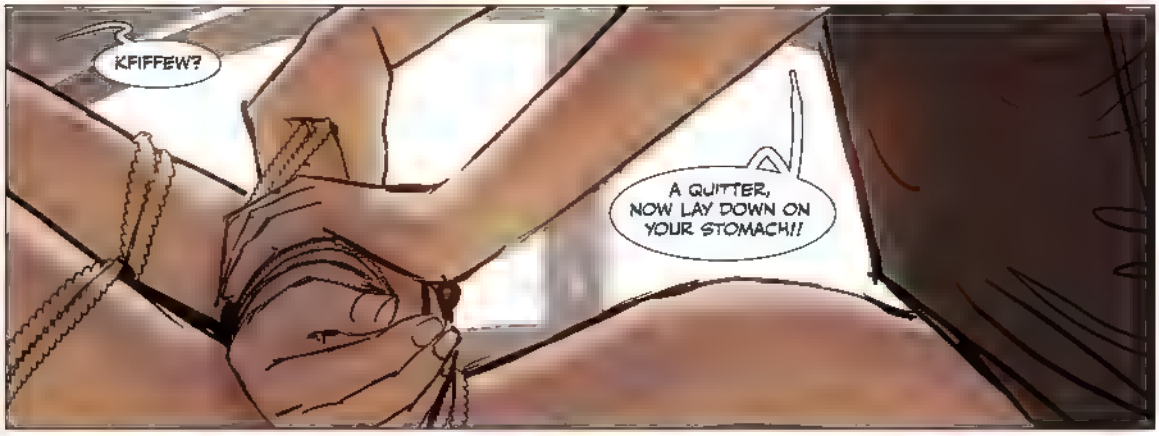
OH, IT'S DOMMY! PRAISE IS A PART OF THE KINK

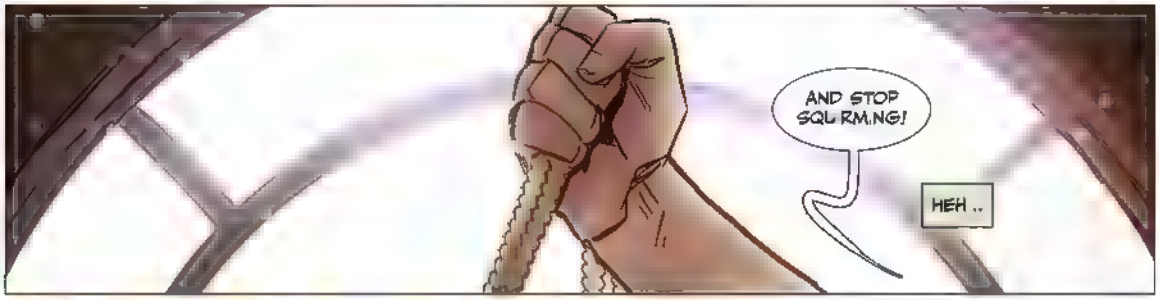
AND... HEH... THANK YOU.

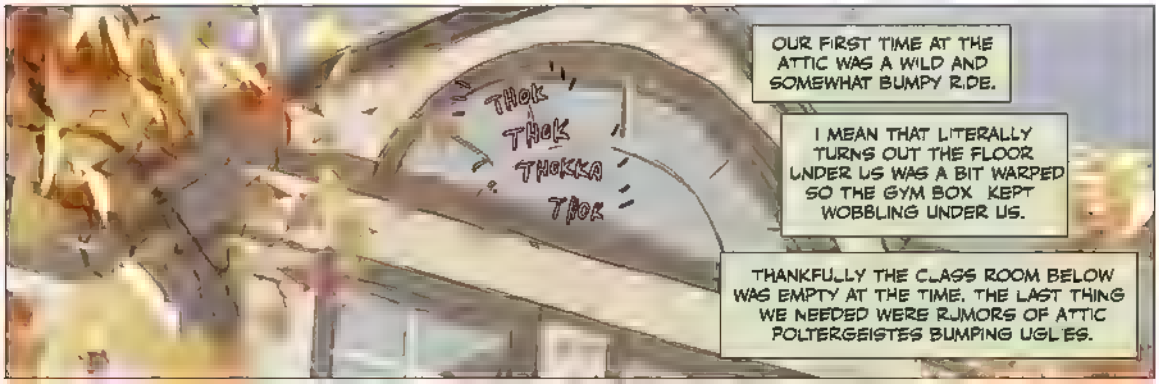
ALLY, I THINK THIS IS THE DAY I FELL IN LOVE.

WHAT?
HEH! NOT WITH YOU. WELL... MAYBE A LITTLE BIT, BUT I THINK THAT'S FINE.
I FEL. IN LOVE WITH ALL OF THIS. BDSM, FOR THE FIRST THING IT FELT MORE THAN SOME KINK. I FELT LIKE WE CREATED SOMETHING WONDERFUL.
GOD YOU'RE A FUCKING NERD.
AND YOU'RE A TERRIBLE SUB!
BUT I'M A GREAT DOMME
NOT TODAY!
OWWMMMM
YES MASTER!


OH WE'RE STILL DOING THIS?
I'M NOT A KFIFFEW


KFIFFEW?
A QUITTER, NOW LAY DOWN ON YOUR STOMACH!!

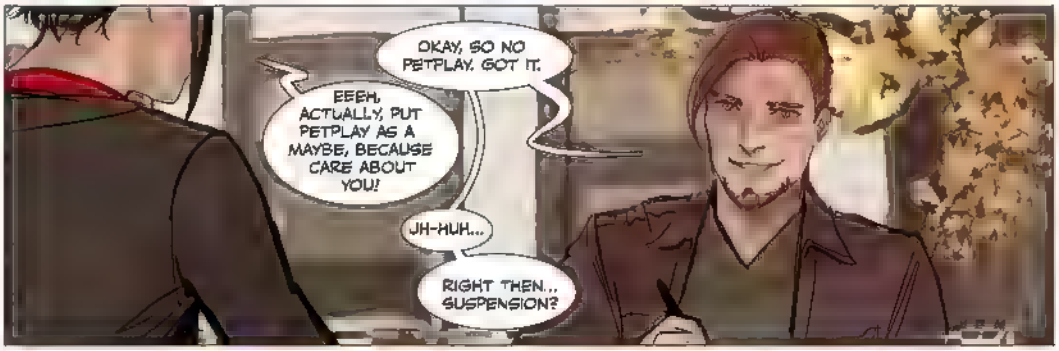

AND STOP SQUIRMING!
HEH ..

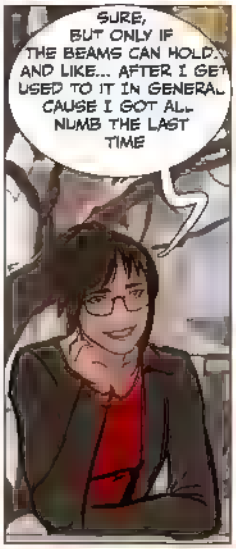

THOK THOK THOKKA THOK
OUR FIRST TIME AT THE ATTIC WAS A WILD AND SOMEWHAT BUMPY RIDE.
I MEAN THAT LITERALLY TURNS OUT THE FLOOR UNDER US WAS A BIT WARPED SO THE GYM BOX KEPT WOBBLING UNDER US.
THANKFULLY THE CLASS ROOM BELOW WAS EMPTY AT THE TIME. THE LAST THING WE NEEDED WERE RUMORS OF ATTIC POLTERGEISTES BUMPING UGLIES.

BUT BEYOND IT BEING AN EXCITING FORBIDDEN EXPERIENCE, THE ATTIC REVEALED SOME FEELINGS THAT NEEDED TO BE ADRESSED
IMPORTANT FEELINGS ABOUT IMPORTANT STUFF.
THERE REALLY WAS NO WAY OF GETTING OUT OF IT.
WE HAD TO HAVE... THE TALK!
NO WAY!
WHAT? WE SAID WE WERE GONNA HAVE AN HONEST CONVERSATION ABOUT WHAT WE'RE OPEN TO TRYING OUT UP THERE WE DON'T WANT ANOTHER DIAPER SCARE, RIGHT?
SO YEAH. THIS IS ME BEING HONEST. I'M OPEN TO IT
YOU'RE OPEN TO PETPLAY?
YEAH. I MEAN HOW IS THIS A SHOCKER. MOST STUFF WE DO INVOLVS COLLARS FOR CRYING OUT LOUD.
YEAH BUT WE'RE TALKING ACTUAL BITCHSUITS!
YEAH. SOME OF THEM LOOK HOT! WHAT?

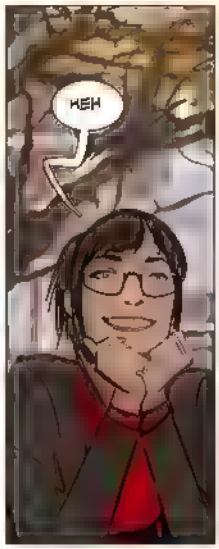
WOW. YOU THINK YOU KNOW SOMEONE
REALLY? THAT DOES NOTHING FOR YOU?
I MEAN... I DON'T KNOW I NEVER REALLY GOT INTO THAT.
ALLY, REMEMBER WHEN YOU GOT ME THOSE ONLINE STORIES. PERSONAL FAVORITES, YOU SAID.
I SEEM TO RECALL ONE WITH SOME GIRL APPLYING TO BECOME A FAMILIAR TO A WITCH AND...
I DOWNLOADED THE WRONG ONE, OKAY. I'M NOT INTO PETPLAY!

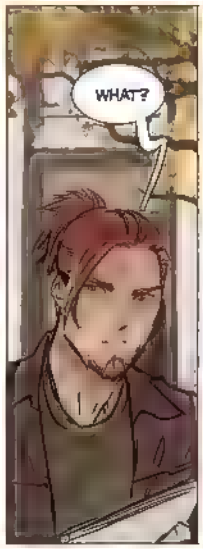
FUNNY THING IS SHE WOULD KEEP SAYING THIS FOR YEARS TO COME
I THOUGHT YOU WEREN'T INTO PETPLAY?
I WAS NEVER IN THE SCOUTS EITHER BUT I STILL STICK TO "ALWAYS BE PREPAIRED" MOTTO
THIS ONE IS KINDA NICE.
THAT'S FOR PETPLAY.
I KNOW. IT'S A GIFT FOR LISA. INSPIRATION FOR HER STORIES AND... STUFF.
I THINK I'LL GET THIS ONE
INSPIRATION FOR LISA'S STORIES?
OF COURSE!
BUT I'VE SAID IT BEFORE. ALLY'S A BIG OLD FUCKING LIAR!
BECAUSE TURNS OUT, SHE WAS VERY MUCH INTO PETPLAY.


OKAY, SO NO PETPLAY. GOT IT.
EEEH, ACTUALLY, PUT PETPLAY AS A MAYBE, BECAUSE CARE ABOUT YOU!
UH-HUH...
RIGHT THEN... SUSPENSION?

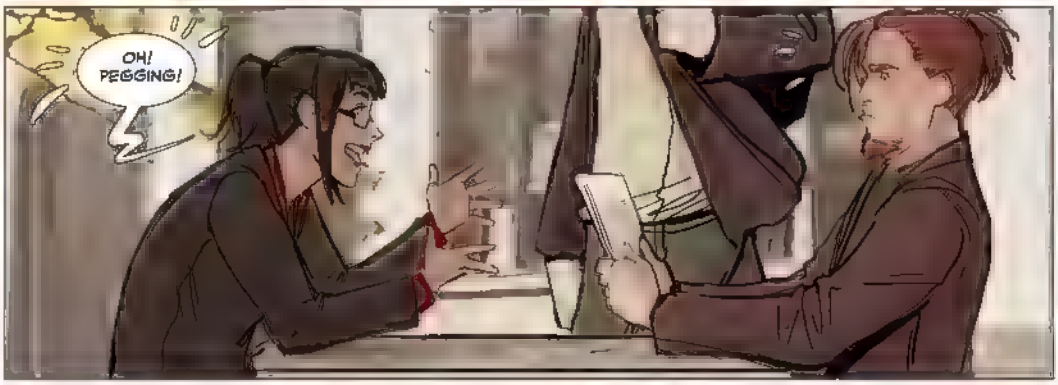

SURE, BUT ONLY IF THE BEAMS CAN HOLD. AND LIKE... AFTER I GET USED TO IT IN GENERAL CAUSE I GOT ALL NUMB THE LAST TIME

YUP, FAIR POINT

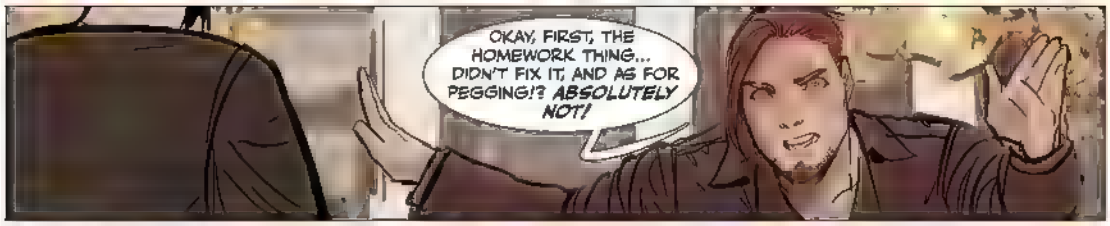

HEH


WHAT?

I'M SORRY, IT'S JUST... I STILL CAN'T BELIEVE YOU'RE INTO PETPLAY. I NEVER WOULD HAVE PEGGED YOU FOR---

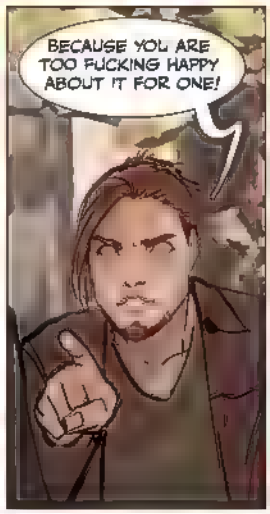

OH! PEGGING!

UH--- HOMEWORK!

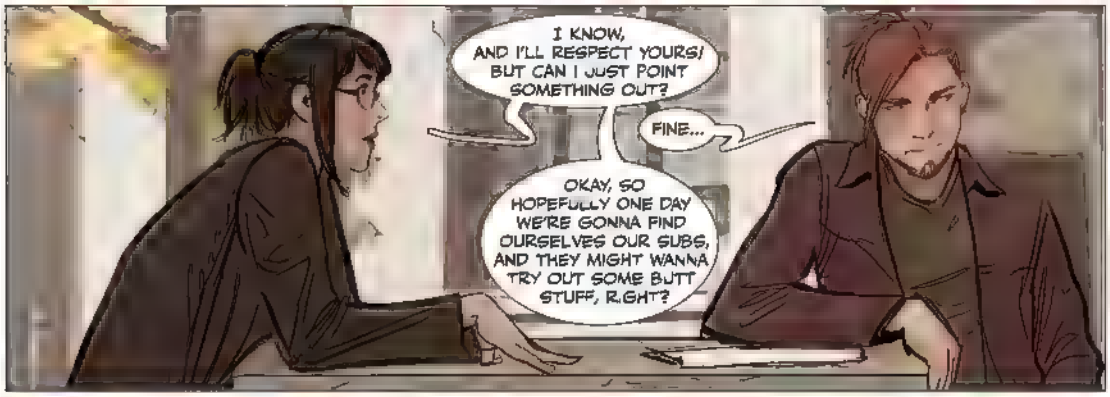

OKAY, FIRST, THE HOMEWORK THING... DIDN'T FIX IT, AND AS FOR PEGGING!? ABSOLUTELY NOT!

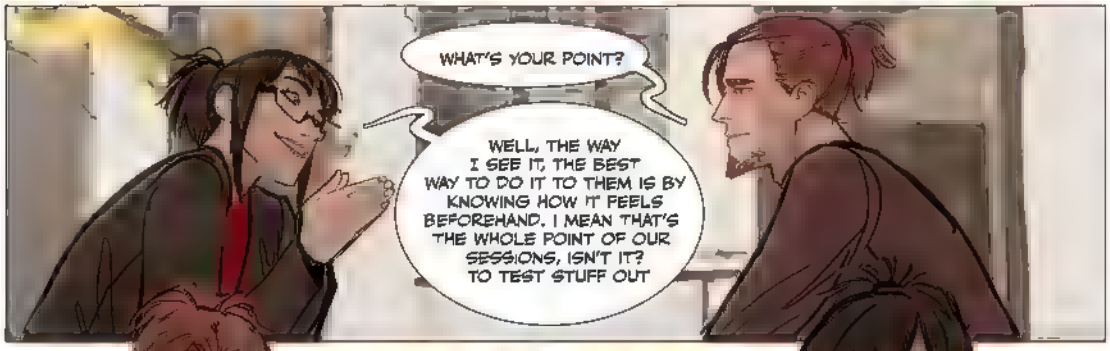
YEAH, NO.
FIRST OF ALL, THAT GUY HEARD THE WORD PEGGING AND STOPPED. HE FUCKING KNOWS WHAT'S UP!

AND AS FOR PEGGING ITSELF... WHY NOT??


BECAUSE YOU ARE TOO FUCKING HAPPY ABOUT IT FOR ONE!

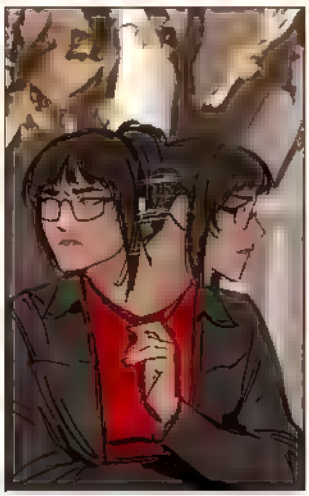
OKAY, JUST HEAR ME OUT!
ALLY, I RESPECTED YOUR LIMITS


I KNOW, AND I'LL RESPECT YOURS! BUT CAN I JUST POINT SOMETHING OUT?
FINE...
OKAY, SO HOPEFULLY ONE DAY WE'RE GONNA FIND OURSELVES OUR SUBS, AND THEY MIGHT WANNA TRY OUT SOME BUTT STUFF, RIGHT?


WHAT'S YOUR POINT?
WELL, THE WAY I SEE IT, THE BEST WAY TO DO IT TO THEM IS BY KNOWING HOW IT FEELS BEFOREHAND. I MEAN THAT'S THE WHOLE POINT OF OUR SESSIONS, ISN'T IT? TO TEST STUFF OUT

SIGH...

WE'LL DO IT TOGETHER.



I'LL... *THINK* ABOUT IT.

FAIR ENOUGH. BUT WOW, YOU REALLY FREAKED OUT ABOUT PEGGING,

ALLY, ONE WORD *DIAPER!*

YEAH, FINE I FREAKED OUT A BIT TOO. BUT SERIOUSLY, IT'S NOT LIKE I WAS JUST GONNA RAM IT IN THERE I WOULD HAVE BOUGHT YOU A DINNER FIRST

FUCK OFF! ALSO IT JUST OCCURRED TO ME THAT SINCE I MET YOU MY L FE HAS GOTTEN EXPONENTIALLY WEIRDER.

THE WORD YOU'RE LOOKING FOR IS BETTER!

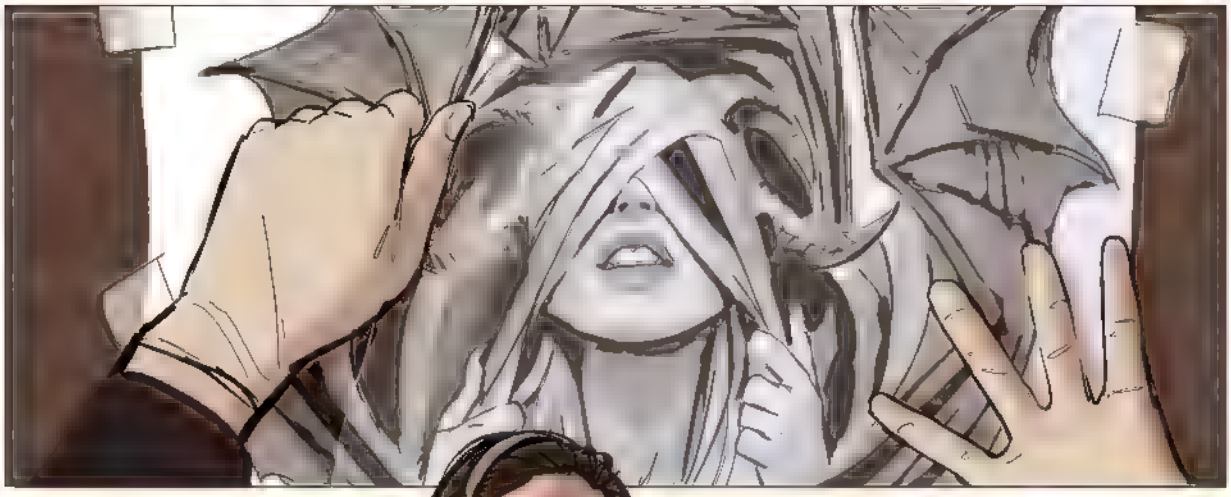
ALSO PETPLAY INVOLVES BUTTPLUG TAILS.

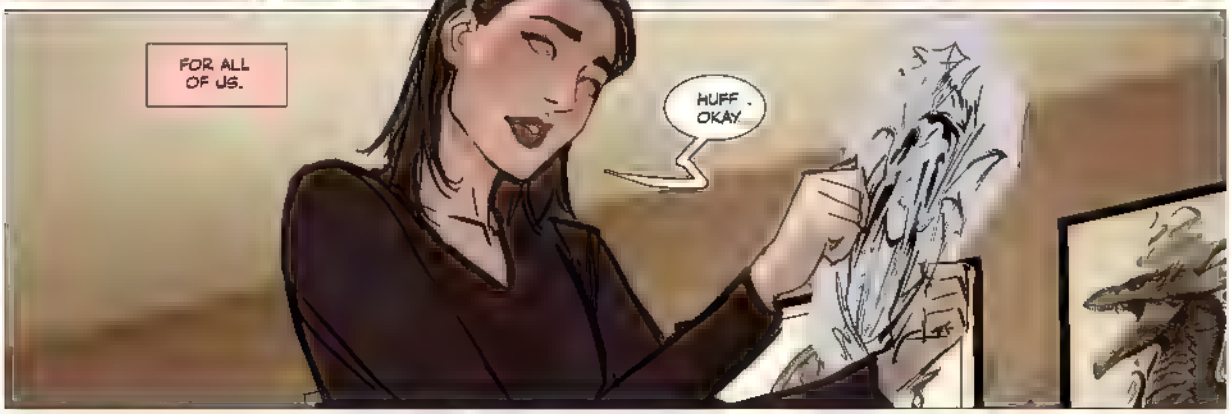
JUST SAYIN'.

HEH!

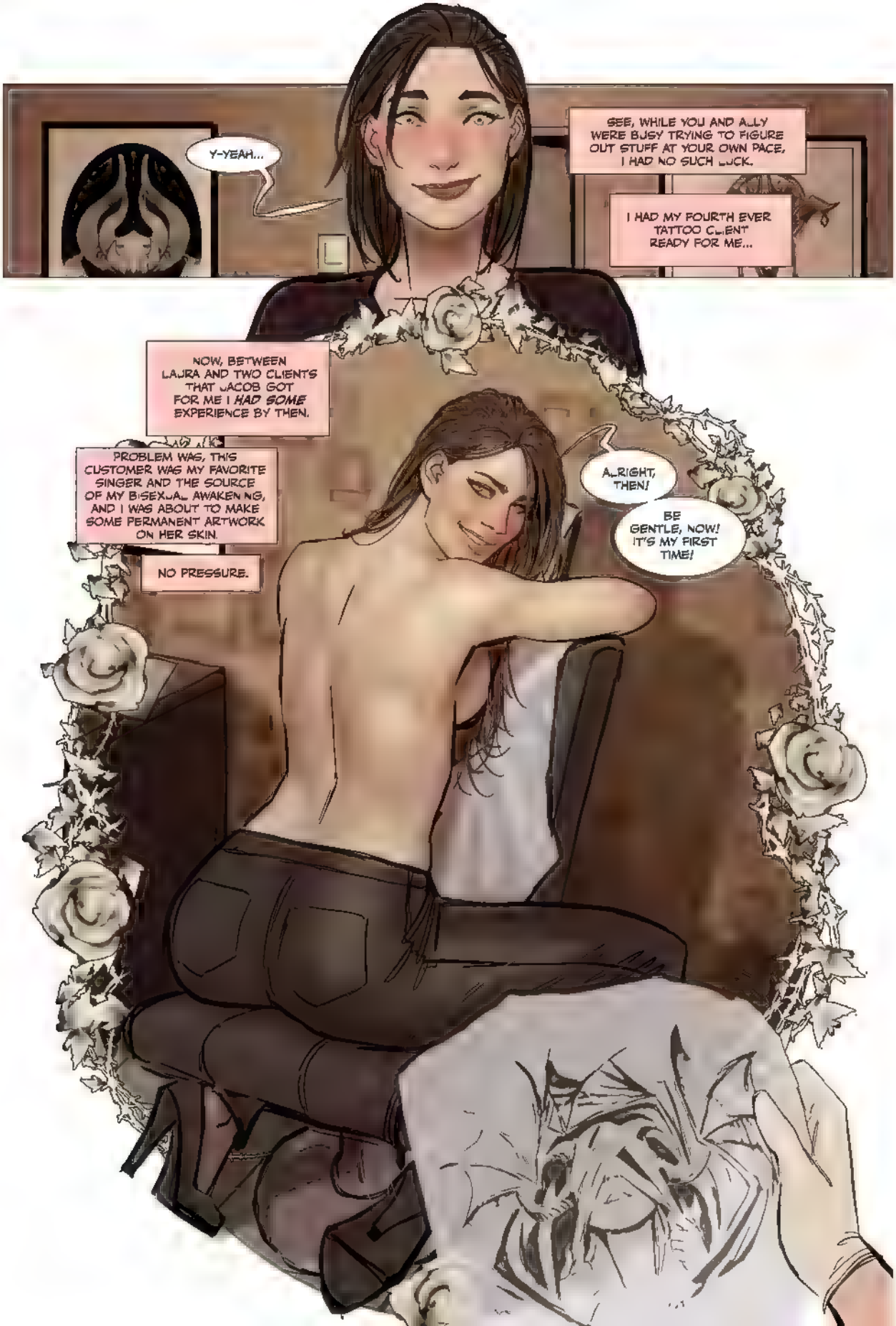
YEAH... THIS WAS GOING TO BE A WILD YEAR.

OH YES. THAT WAS A WILD YEAR



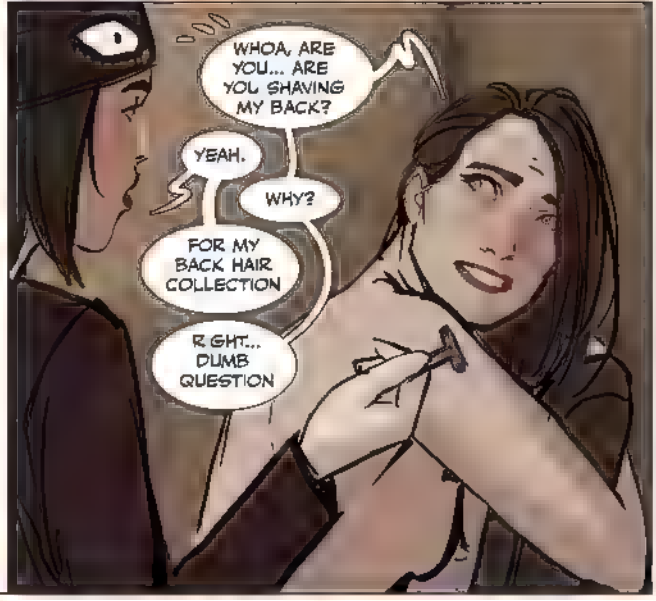

FOR ALL OF US.
HUFF - OKAY...

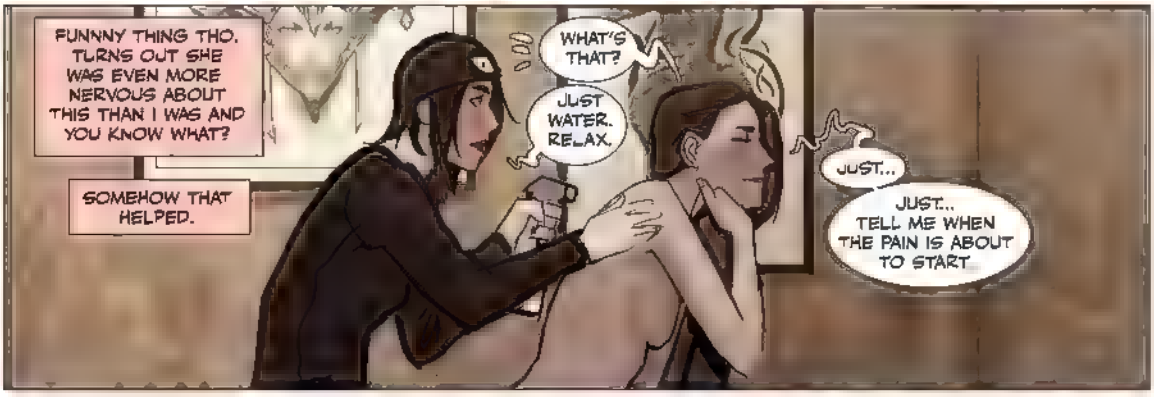
EVERYTHING GOOD?
GNNN---


Y-YEAH...
SEE, WHILE YOU AND ALLY WERE BUSY TRYING TO FIGURE OUT STUFF AT YOUR OWN PACE, I HAD NO SUCH LUCK.
I HAD MY FOURTH EVER TATTOO CLIENT READY FOR ME...
NOW, BETWEEN LAURA AND TWO CLIENTS THAT JACOB GOT FOR ME I *HAD SOME* EXPERIENCE BY THEN.
PROBLEM WAS, THIS CUSTOMER WAS MY FAVORITE SINGER AND THE SOURCE OF MY BISEXUAL AWAKENING, AND I WAS ABOUT TO MAKE SOME PERMANENT ARTWORK ON HER SKIN.
NO PRESSURE.
ALRIGHT, THEN!
BE GENTLE, NOW! IT'S MY FIRST TIME!

OKAY

LET'S DO THIS!

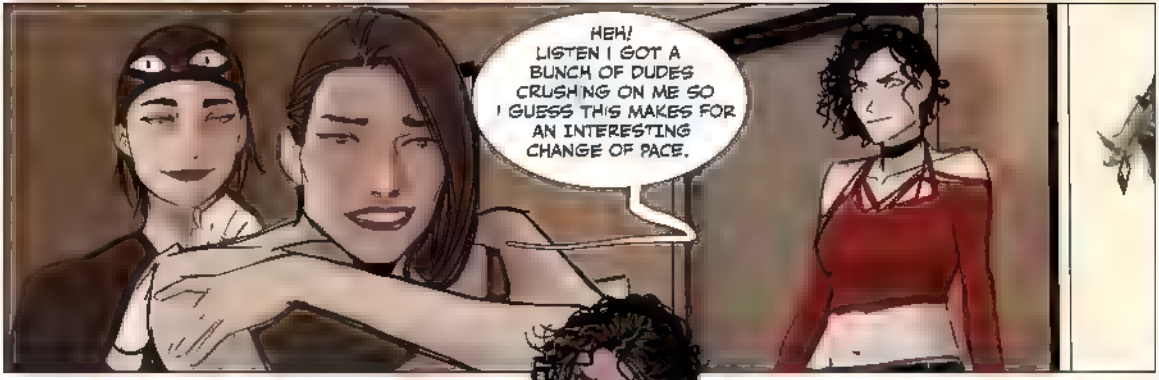

WHOA, ARE YOU... ARE YOU SHAVING MY BACK?
YEAH.
WHY?
FOR MY BACK HAIR COLLECTION
RIGHT... DUMB QUESTION


FUNNNY THING THO. TURNS OUT SHE WAS EVEN MORE NERVOUS ABOUT THIS THAN I WAS AND YOU KNOW WHAT?
SOMEHOW THAT HELPED.
WHAT'S THAT?
JUST WATER. RELAX.
JUST...
JUST... TELL ME WHEN THE PAIN IS ABOUT TO START

WAIT! YOU'RE NERVOUS ABOUT THIS?
WHAT GAVE IT AWAY?
MY TWITCHING OR MY VOICE GOING FULL ON SOPRANO MID SENTENCE?

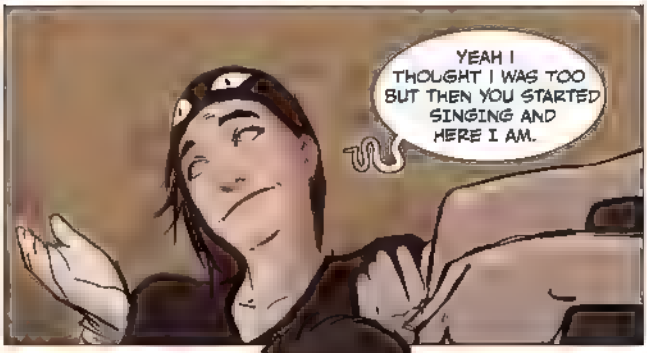
WELL, I'M PRETTY SURE I GOT YOU BEAT ON THE FREAKING OUT TERRITORY
HOW COME?
WELL... I'M HERE STARING AT YOUR SMOOTH, PRISTINE BACK AND...UH...
FUCK. I'M SOUNDING LIKE A MASSIVE CREEP HERE, AREN'T I?
YOU'RE NOT IN THE RESTRAINING ORDER TERRITORY YET.
GO ON.
RIGHT. POINT IS I KINDA FEEL LIKE SOMEONE CASUALLY ASKED ME TO IMPROVE ON THE MONA LISA REAL QUICK.
WAIT, ARE WE GONNA BE OKAY HERE?
YOU DON'T HAVE LIKE SHAKEY HANDS RIGHT NOW?
WHAT? OH, NO, NOTHING LIKE THAT. IT'S JUST... HONESTLY? I'M A BIT STARSTRUCK I GUESS
STARSTRUCK...
BY ME?
WELL, YEAH.

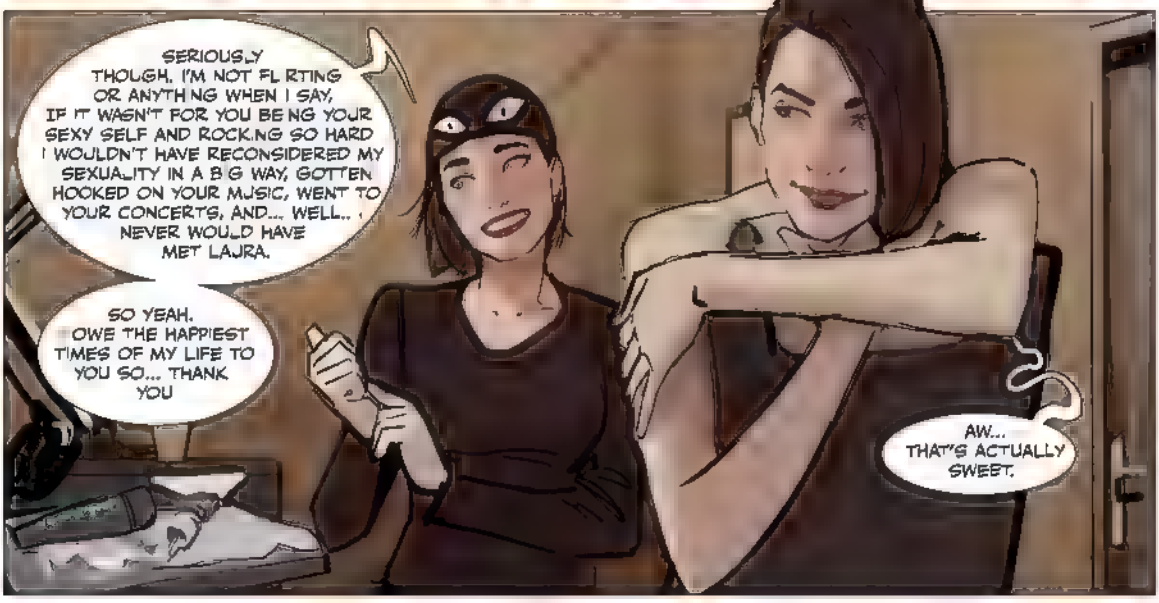
WHOO BOY I'M SO FAR FROM BEING A STAR 'S NOT EVEN FUNNY
OH SHUT UP! YOU ARE AMAZ NG!
AND... I GUESS I'M ALSO FEELING A LOT OF PRESSURE RIGHT NOW CAUSE I KINDA OWE YOU A LOT.
YOU OWE ME?
Y---EAH. YOU WERE KINDA MY BISEXUAL AWAKENING
UH
I... PROBABLY COULD HAVE SPARED YOU THAT INFO, HUH?


HEH! LISTEN I GOT A BUNCH OF DUDES CRUSHING ON ME SO I GUESS THIS MAKES FOR AN INTERESTING CHANGE OF PACE.

WHOOP-DE-DO THIS MAKES FOR AN INTERESTING CHANGE OF PACE. EVERYONE WANTS ME!

I'M STRAIGHT THO.


YEAH I THOUGHT I WAS TOO BUT THEN YOU STARTED SINGING AND HERE I AM.


SERIOUSLY THOUGH. I'M NOT FLIRTING OR ANYTHING WHEN I SAY, IF IT WASN'T FOR YOU BEING YOUR SEXY SELF AND ROCKING SO HARD I WOULDN'T HAVE RECONSIDERED MY SEXUALITY IN A BIG WAY, GOTTEN HOOKED ON YOUR MUSIC, WENT TO YOUR CONCERTS, AND... WELL... I NEVER WOULD HAVE MET LAURA.
SO YEAH. I OWE THE HAPPIEST TIMES OF MY LIFE TO YOU SO... THANK YOU
AW... THAT'S ACTUALLY SWEET.

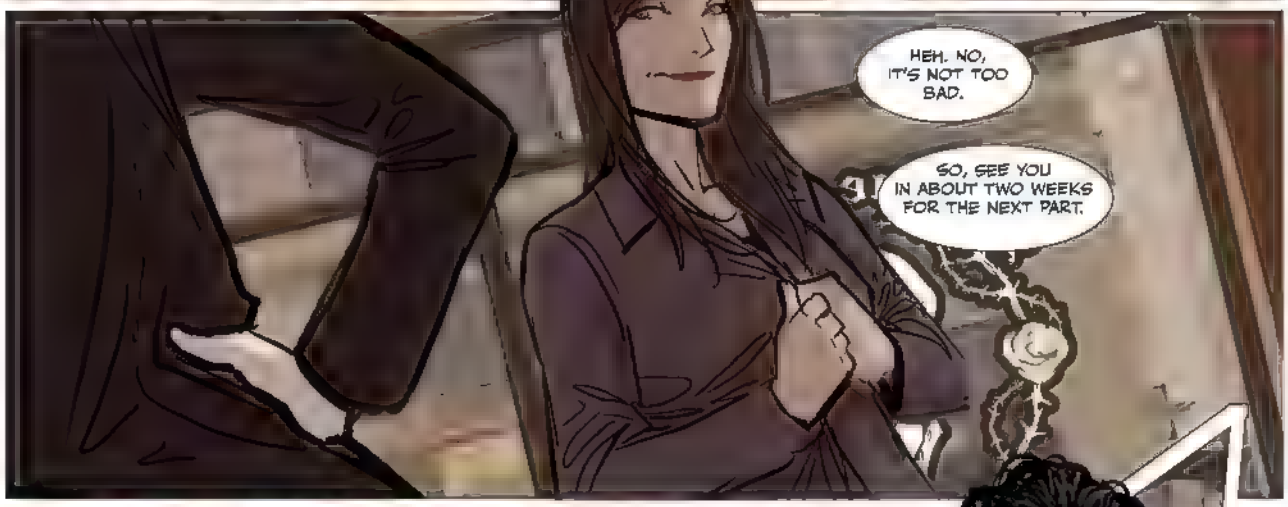
AND WHILE WE'RE AT IT, LAURA WOULD NEVER HAVE MET ME EITHER SOOO...
SAY THANK YOU LAURA.

LAURA?

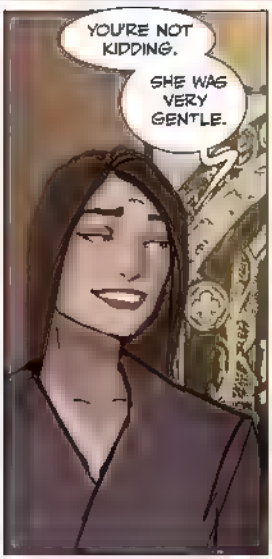
OH... I GUESS SHE WENT TO THE BATHROOM OR SOMETHING

HAHAHAHAHAAH!

A FEW HOURS LATER.
DOESN'T HURT TOO MUCH, DOES IT?


HEH. NO, IT'S NOT TOO BAD.
SO, SEE YOU IN ABOUT TWO WEEKS FOR THE NEXT PART.

TILL THEN REMEMBER TWHAT I...
OH HEY, LOOK WHO'S FINALLY BACK
UH... YEAH I HAD TO GET SOMETHING DONE BUT... I LEFT YOU IN HER COMPETENT HANDS


YOU'RE NOT KIDDING.
SHE WAS VERY GENTLE.

OH I'M SURE SHE WAS.

ANYWAYS, SEE YOU BOTH
YUP!

WHERE WERE YOU!?

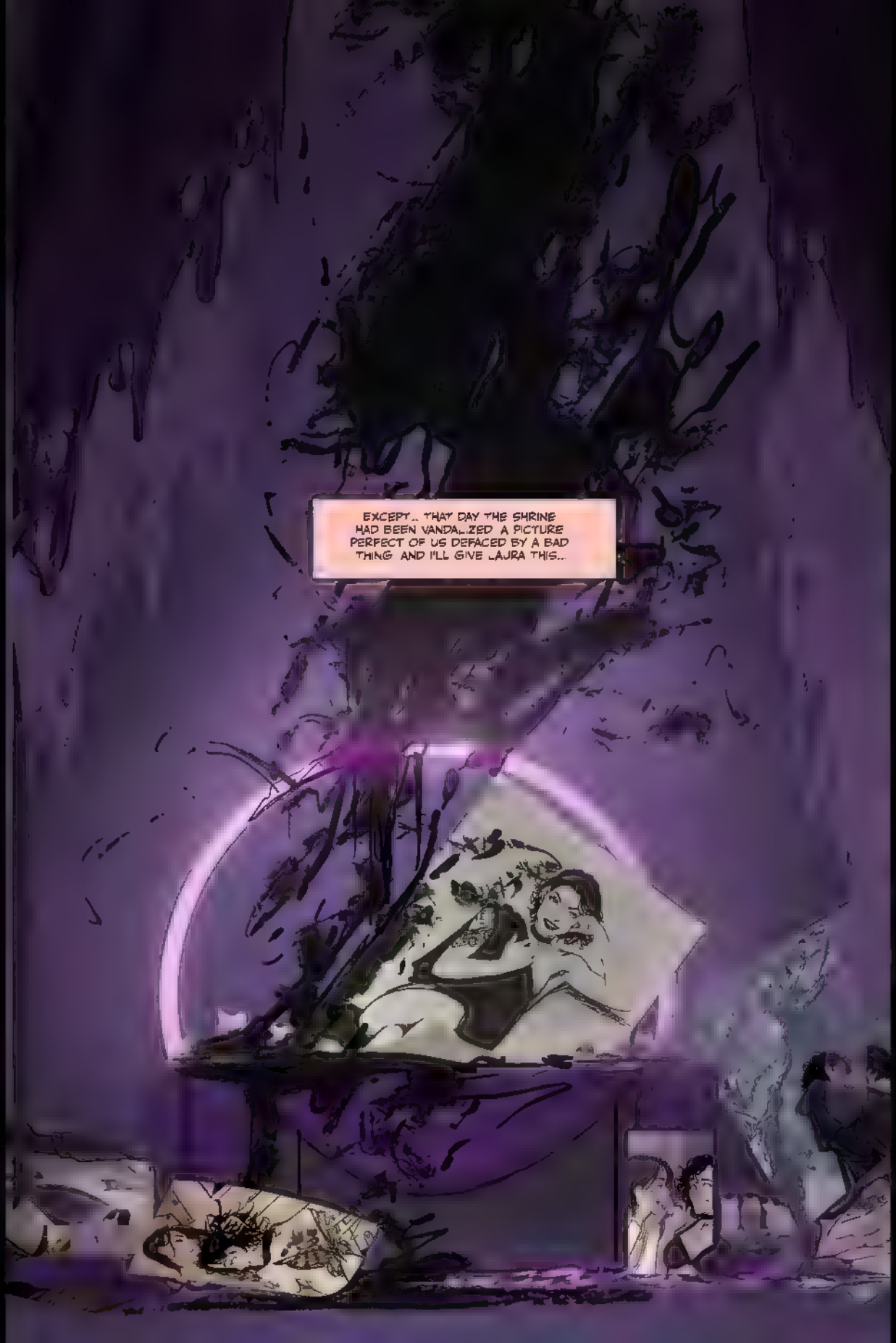
I THOUGHT THE TWO OF YOU COULD USE SOME PRIVACY.
WHAT?
NOTHING... YOU GOING? IT'S CLOSING TIME.
LAURA?
HEY, TALK TO ME WHAT'S WRONG?
NOTHING. I... I JUST ...I SAW YOU GETTING ALL COZY WITH HER AND..., WELL I DIDN'T LIKE IT, OKAY? I'M ALLOWED NOT TO LIKE IT!
HOLD UP DID YOU THINK I WAS FLIRTING WITH HER?
I DON'T KNOW WERE YOU?
LAURA, WHAT THE FUCK IS YOUR PROBLEM?
YOU . WHY DID YOU GO AND TELL HER THAT SHE WAS YOUR, AND I'M QUOTING HERE "BISEXUAL AWAKENING"

WHAT? BECAUSE IT'S FUCKING TRUE? YOU KNOW THIS, I TOLD YOU THE WHOLE STORY BEFORE
YES I KNOW IT BUT SHE DOESN'T HAVE TO! WHY WOULD YOU EVEN BRING IT UP? WERE YOU HOPING FOR A CHANCE THAT SHE MIGHT.
MIGHT...
I WAS NEVER THE CRYING TYPE. I GUESS IN THAT I TOOK AFTER MY DAD... THROUGH MOST OF THE BAD TIMES IN MY LIFE, I WAS ALWAYS GOOD AT HOLDING BACK THE TEARS, BUT THAT DAY I COULDN'T DO IT.
YOU WANNA KNOW WHY I TOLD HER?
I DID IT BECAUSE... GHK I WANTED TO THANK HER... BECAUSE OF THAT MOMENT AND HER MUSIC I ENDED UP MEETING YOU...I WANTED TO THANK HER FOR BRINGING YOU INTO MY LIFE!
BUT I GUESS YOU WERE TOO PISSY TO STICK AROUND AND HEAR THAT FUCKING PART WEREN'T YOU!?
A-ANNE-
FUCK OFF. I'M GOING HOME!

NO!
ANNE!
LEAVE ME ALONE!
I SAID!
LET GO!
NO!
I AM SO SO SO SORRY, OKAY?
I AM A COLOSSAL IDIOT!

PLEASE FORGIVE ME. PLEASE, ANNE. PLEASE PLEASE PLEASE, I... I FUCKED UP. I...
SIGH...
YOU REALLY ARE AN IDIOT
YES!
BUT NEVER DO THIS TO ME AGAIN!
NEVER EVER!
PROMISE!
I PROMISE!

I WON'T LIE... MORE THAN ANYTHING I WANTED TO BELIEVE HER
GUESS WHAT WITH MY RELATIONSHIP WITH MY DAD, I KINDA GOT USED TO HONESTY BEING A GIVEN. A PROMISE MEANT SOMETHING. A PROMISE WAS IMPORTANT. IT WAS REAL
AND... WELL, THERE WAS THE OTHER THING, TOO. SHE WAS MY FIRST TRUE LOVE
I DON'T KNOW. I GUESS I ALWAYS IMAGINED IT THAT WHEN WE CARE ABOUT SOMEONE WE BUILD A SHRINE FOR THEM IN OUR HEARTS, STOCKPILING ONE WONDERFUL MEMORY AFTER ANOTHER...
AND I IMAGINED MY SHRINE TO HER AS A MAGENTA LIT WALL OF PRECIOUS MEMORIES... OF FIRST TIMES, SECOND TIMES... WONDERFUL TIMES

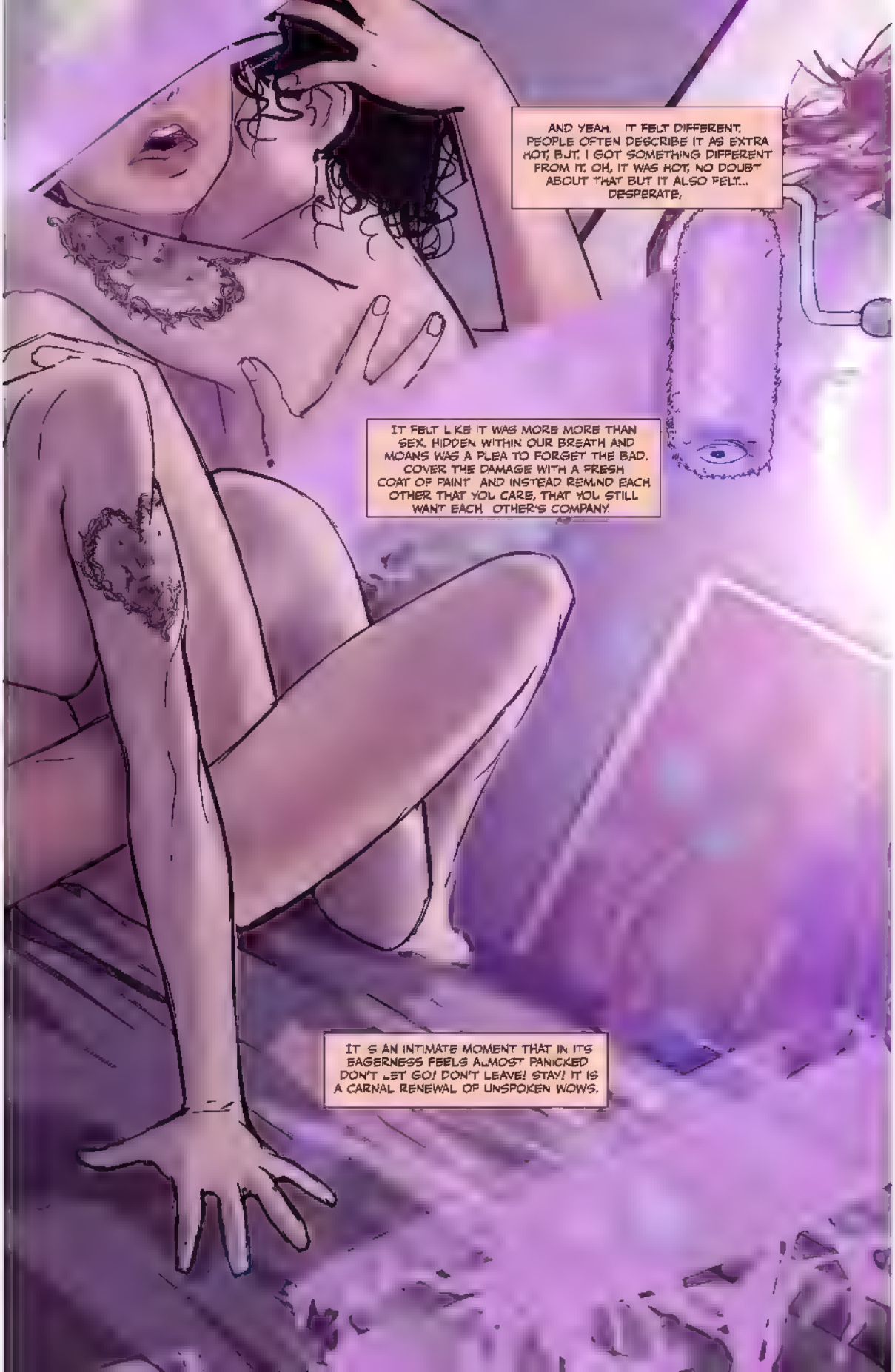

EXCEPT.. THAT DAY THE SHRINE HAD BEEN VANDALIZED A PICTURE PERFECT OF US DEFACED BY A BAD THING AND I'LL GIVE LAURA THIS...

WHATEVER FLAWS SHE HAD AT THE TIME, MY GIRL WAS NOT A QUITTER.
FIX'R UP'R

INSTEAD OF GOING HOME, SHE INVITED ME TO HER PLACE THAT NIGHT.
I ACCEPTED... I... WANTED TO HEAL THIS, AND SHE WAS DETERMINED TO DO THE SAME
LIKE .. STRIP SERENADING ME DETERMINED.
IT WOULD HAVE BEEN HILARIOUS AND WONDERFUL IF THE MOOD OF IT ALL DIDN'T FEEL SO... CAREFUL
AFTER ALL, WHEN SOMETHING PRECIOUS HAS BEEN DAMAGED YOU TREAT IT WITH CARE...

YOU TREAT IT LOVINGLY

SO YEAH... THAT WAS THE FIRST TIME I'VE EVER HAD MAKE UP SEX.


AND YEAH. IT FELT DIFFERENT. PEOPLE OFTEN DESCRIBE IT AS EXTRA HOT, BUT, I GOT SOMETHING DIFFERENT FROM IT. OH, IT WAS HOT, NO DOUBT ABOUT THAT BUT IT ALSO FELT... DESPERATE.
IT FELT L KE IT WAS MORE MORE THAN SEX. HIDDEN WITHIN OUR BREATH AND MOANS WAS A PLEA TO FORGET THE BAD. COVER THE DAMAGE WITH A FRESH COAT OF PAINT AND INSTEAD REM.ND EACH OTHER THAT YOU CARE, THAT YOU STILL WANT EACH OTHER'S COMPANY.
IT S AN INTIMATE MOMENT THAT IN ITS EAGERNESS FEELS ALMOST PANICKED DON'T LET GO! DON'T LEAVE! STAY! IT IS A CARNAL RENEWAL OF UNSPOKEN WOWS.

AND THAT'S WHAT LAURA COMMITED TO DOING THAT NIGHT
SHE WANTED TO FIX IT
DESPERATELY AND EAGERLY
TO UNDO THE BAD MEMORIES
AND REPLACE THEM WITH GOOD ONES

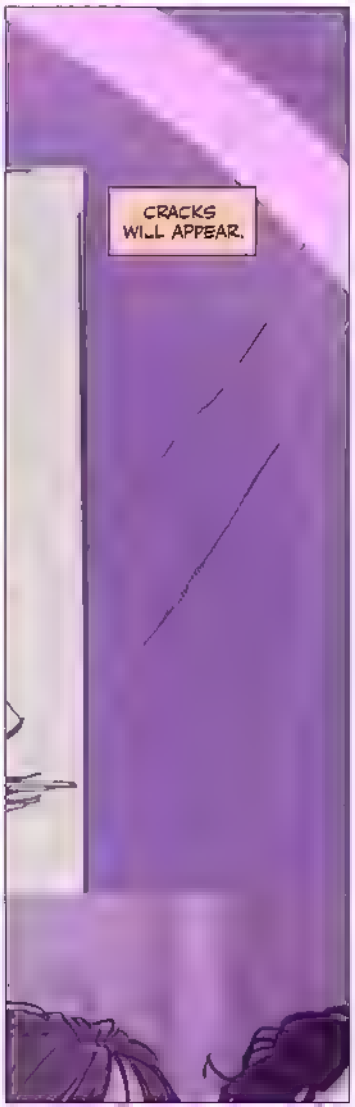
AND YOU KNOW WHAT... BETWEEN APPLYING THAT ELBOW GREASE...
RUB RUB
FXR UP'R
AND A GENEROUS AMOUNT OF SPITSHINE ..
FU-HUUU-CK!

SHE PULLED IT OFF

IN THE POST ORGASMIC BLISS HER LITTLE BOUT OF JEALOUSY FELT A LIFETIME AWAY, AND THE ONLY THING THAT MATTERED WAS THE PRESENT.

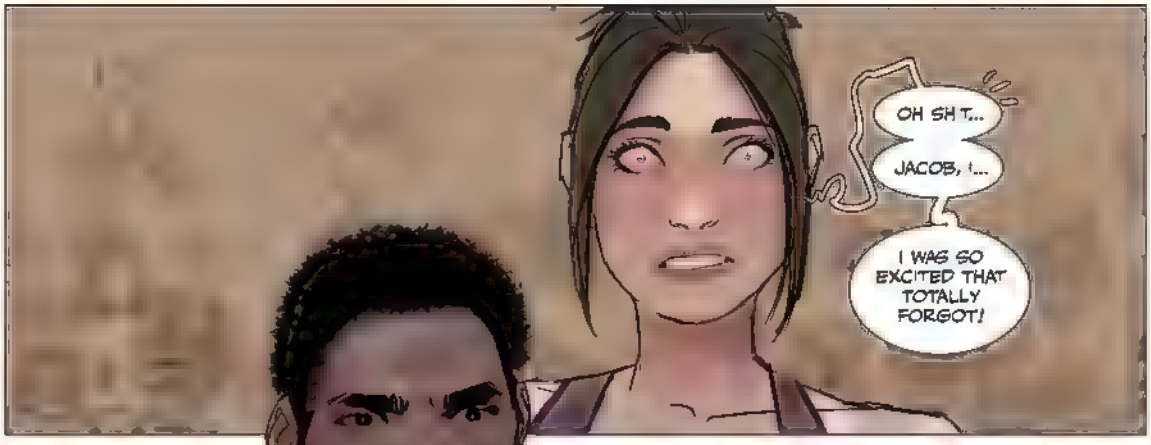
BUT. THAT BUZZ INEVITABLY FADES AWAY... AND SEX, NO MATTER HOW GOOD IT IS, CAN'T FIX EVERYTHING.

TURNS OUT IF YOU DON'T ADRESS THE REAL PROBLEM, NO MATTER THE AMOUNT OF EFFORT TO COVER IT UP SOONER OR LATER...

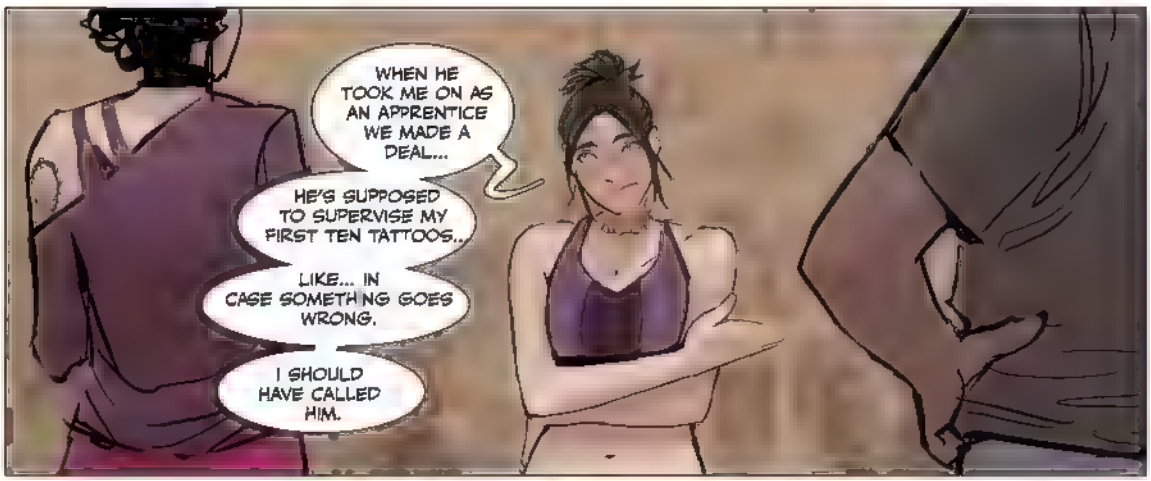

CRACKS WILL APPEAR.

OH, AND SPEAKING OF CRACKS...
WHAT THE FU---
ANNE?
WERE YOU IN A CAR CRASH?
WHAT?

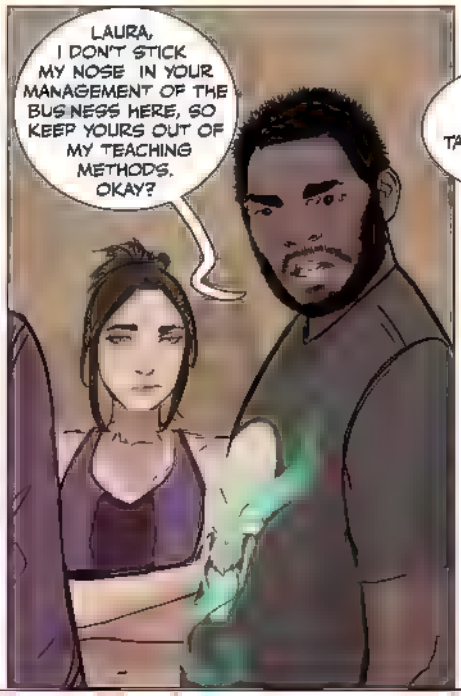
RIGHT... IS EVERYTHING OKAY AT HOME THEN?
YEAH? WHY?
YOU SURE?
OF COURSE I'M SURE, WHAT'S WRONG?
JACOB?
LAURA!
WHAT?
DID YOU SCRATCH HER UP LIKE THAT?
OH THAT... UM, MAYBE? PROBABLY? YEAH?
FOR CRYING OUT LOUD... JUST... GET DRESSED
OH, GOD. JACOB, I'M SO SORRY.
NAH, IT'S FINE MAYBE THIS IS GOD OR SOMETHING TELLING YOU NOT TO GET A BAND TATTOO, BUT WHAT DO I KNOW...
OH NO. I'M COMMITTED. STILL...SUCKS. I WANTED TO SHOW IT TO THE MIRIAM WHEN I CONTINUE HER TATTOO...
I'M SORRY YOU WANNA RUN THAT BY ME AGAIN?


OH SH T...
JACOB, I...
I WAS SO EXCITED THAT TOTALLY FORGOT!

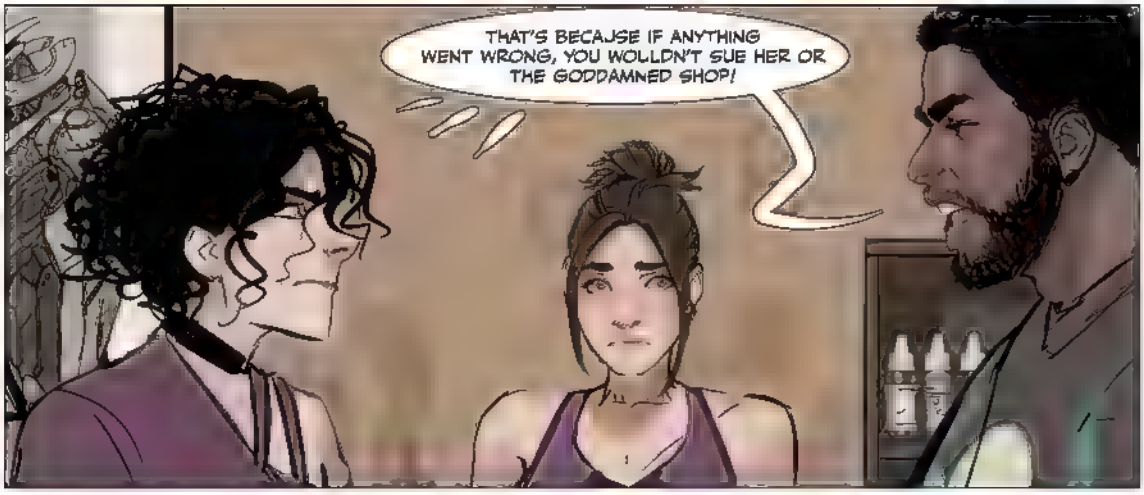
YOU FORGOT..
YOU'RE SHITTING ME?
WHAT'S THE PROBLEM?


WHEN HE TOOK ME ON AS AN APPRENTICE WE MADE A DEAL...
HE'S SUPPOSED TO SUPERVISE MY FIRST TEN TATTOOS..
LIKE... IN CASE SOMETH NG GOES WRONG.
I SHOULD HAVE CALLED HIM.

OH COME ON...
THERE ARE FIRST TIMERS OUT THERE TATTOING ON THEIR OWN


LAURA, I DON'T STICK MY NOSE IN YOUR MANAGEMENT OF THE BUSINESS HERE, SO KEEP YOURS OUT OF MY TEACHING METHODS. OKAY?

FINE...BE A FRIGGIN DIVA....
BUT I'M JUST SAYING, YOU LET HER TATTOO *ME* WITHOUT SUPERVISION!


THAT'S BECAUSE IF ANYTHING WENT WRONG, YOU WOULDN'T SUE HER OR THE GODDAMNED SHOP!

STOP! PLEASE!
JACOB, THIS IS MY FAULT.
AND LAURA, LET ME DEAL WITH MY OWN FUCKUPS!

I'M SORRY. I WAS STARSTRUCK AND GOT CAUGHT UP IN THE MOMENT. IT WAS STUPID, I APOLOGIZE AND IT WON'T HAPPEN AGAIN.
AND. . I'D APPRECIATE IT IF YOU'D SUPERVISE MY SHADING.

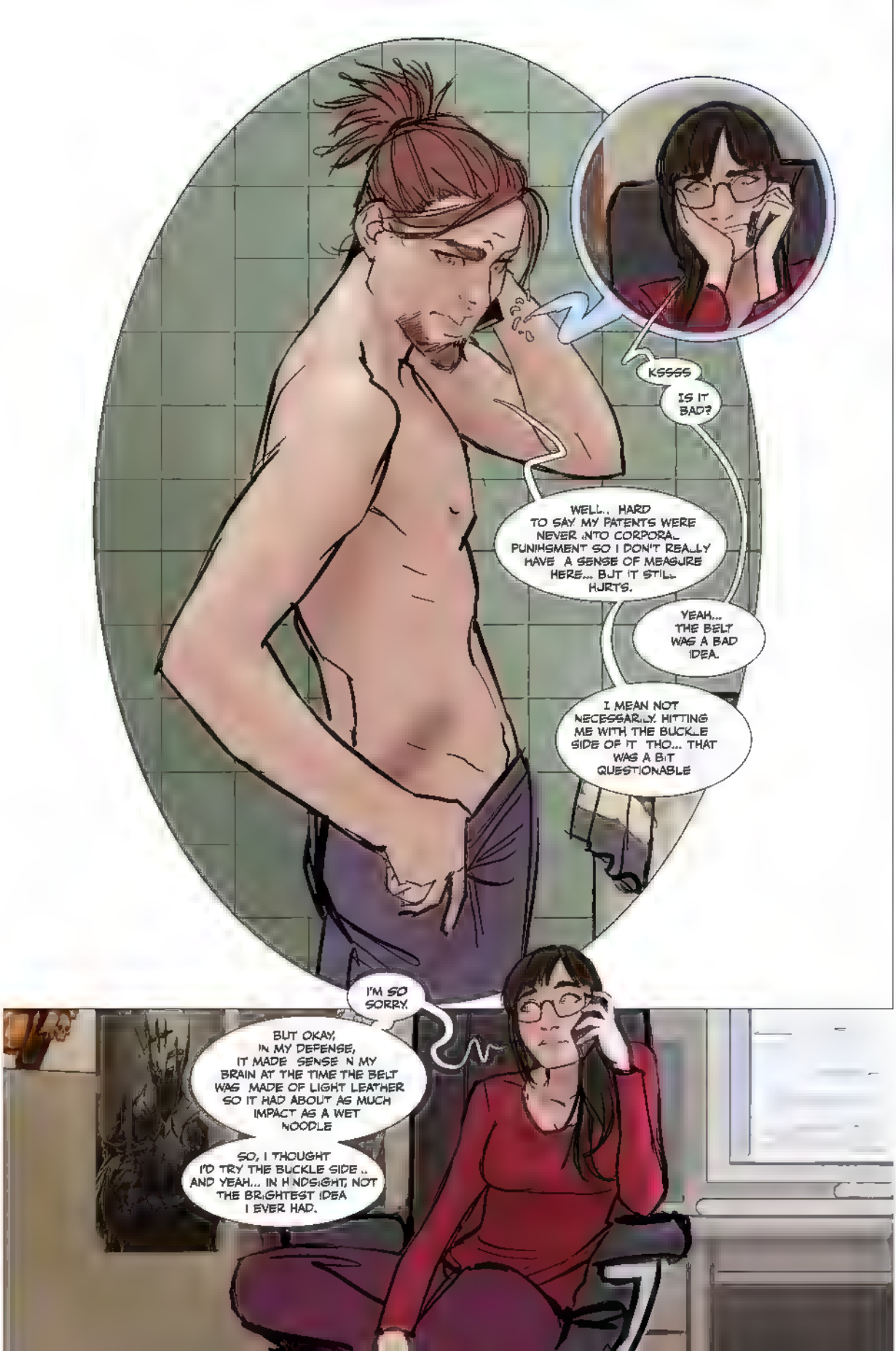
FINE...
NOW GET DRESSED. I SWEAR, YOU LOOK LIKE YOU SPENT THE NIGHT IN THE LOSING CORNER OF A FIGHTING MATCH.

OH COME ON, IT'S JUST A FEW HICKEYS!
IT'S NOT THAT BAD!

WHAT!? I'M PASSIONATE!
YOU'RE A FREAK IS WHAT YOU ARE!

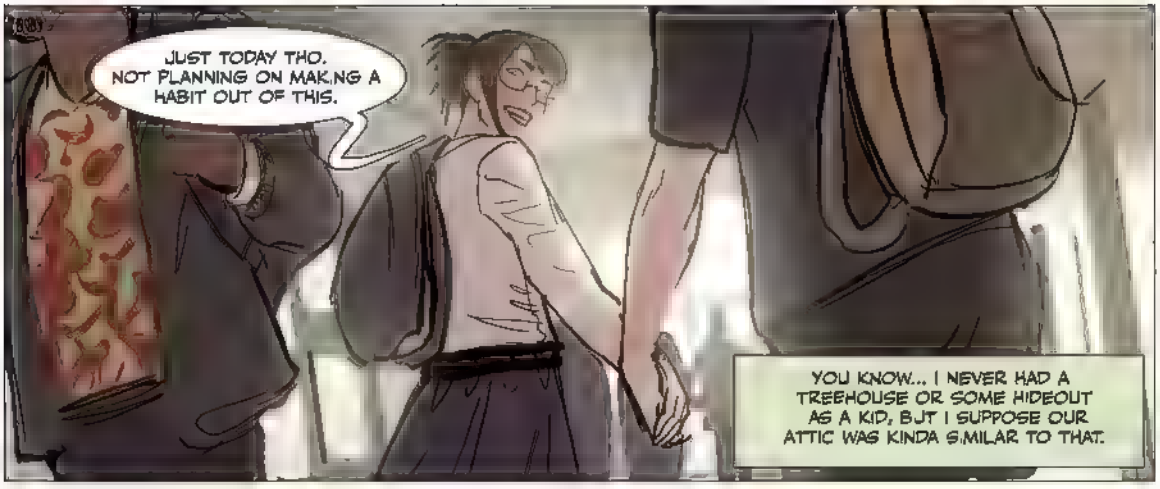
HEY! WHAT WE DO IN OUR BED IS OUR BUSINESS!
OH FOR SURE!
BUT ME SCHEDULING A SESSION AND THEN YOU FUCKING UP MY CANVAS MADE IT MY BUSINESS AS WELL.

SIGH... COULD HAVE TAKEN ON AN ACTUAL CLIENT..
I SWEAR... BRUISING AND SCRATCHING HER UP LIKE THAT.. WHO DOES THAT?
GODDAMNED PERVERTS, THAT'S WHO!

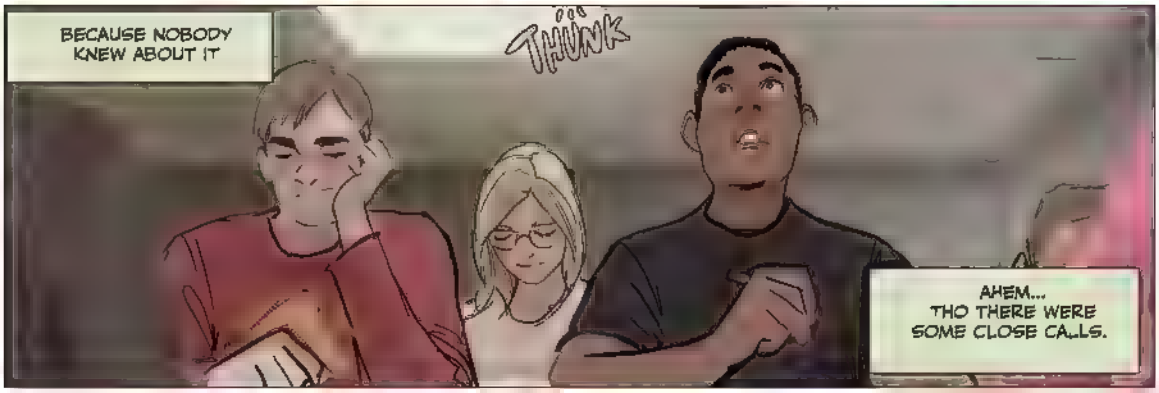

KSSSS
IS IT BAD?
WELL.. HARD TO SAY MY PATENTS WERE NEVER INTO CORPORAL PUNISHMENT SO I DON'T REALLY HAVE A SENSE OF MEASURE HERE... BUT IT STILL HURTS.
YEAH... THE BELT WAS A BAD IDEA.
I MEAN NOT NECESSARILY. HITTING ME WITH THE BUCKLE SIDE OF IT THO... THAT WAS A BIT QUESTIONABLE
I'M SO SORRY.
BUT OKAY, IN MY DEFENSE, IT MADE SENSE IN MY BRAIN AT THE TIME THE BELT WAS MADE OF LIGHT LEATHER SO IT HAD ABOUT AS MUCH IMPACT AS A WET NOODLE
SO, I THOUGHT I'D TRY THE BUCKLE SIDE.. AND YEAH... IN HINDSIGHT, NOT THE BRIGHTEST IDEA I EVER HAD.

YEAH... THANK GOD FOR THE BALLGAG. IT SOAKED UP MOST OF MY
UH...
CONSTRUCTIVE CRITICISM
IF ITS ANY CONSOLATION, IT'S MY TURN NEXT TIME SO... I DUNNO... YOU CAN TEST THE BELT FOR YOURSELF.
HEH!
I'M NOT A VINDICTIVE PERSON. AND ALSO... I REPURPOSED THE BELT ALREADY.
REPURPOSED?
YEAH... I'M WORKING ON SOMETHING.
AND I THINK YOU'LL LIKE IT.

AND SHE DID LIKE IT...
IN FACT, SHE LIKED IT SO MUCH THAT FOR THE FIRST TIME EVER SHE DECIDED TO SKIP A CLASS THAT DAY IN ORDER TO GO TO OUR SECRET PLAYHOUSE.


JUST TODAY THO. NOT PLANNING ON MAKING A HABIT OUT OF THIS.
YOU KNOW... I NEVER HAD A TREEHOUSE OR SOME HIDEOUT AS A KID, BUT I SUPPOSE OUR ATTIC WAS KINDA SIMILAR TO THAT.

BUT IT WAS SO MUCH BETTER.


BECAUSE NOBODY KNEW ABOUT IT
THUNK
AHEM... THO THERE WERE SOME CLOSE CALLS.

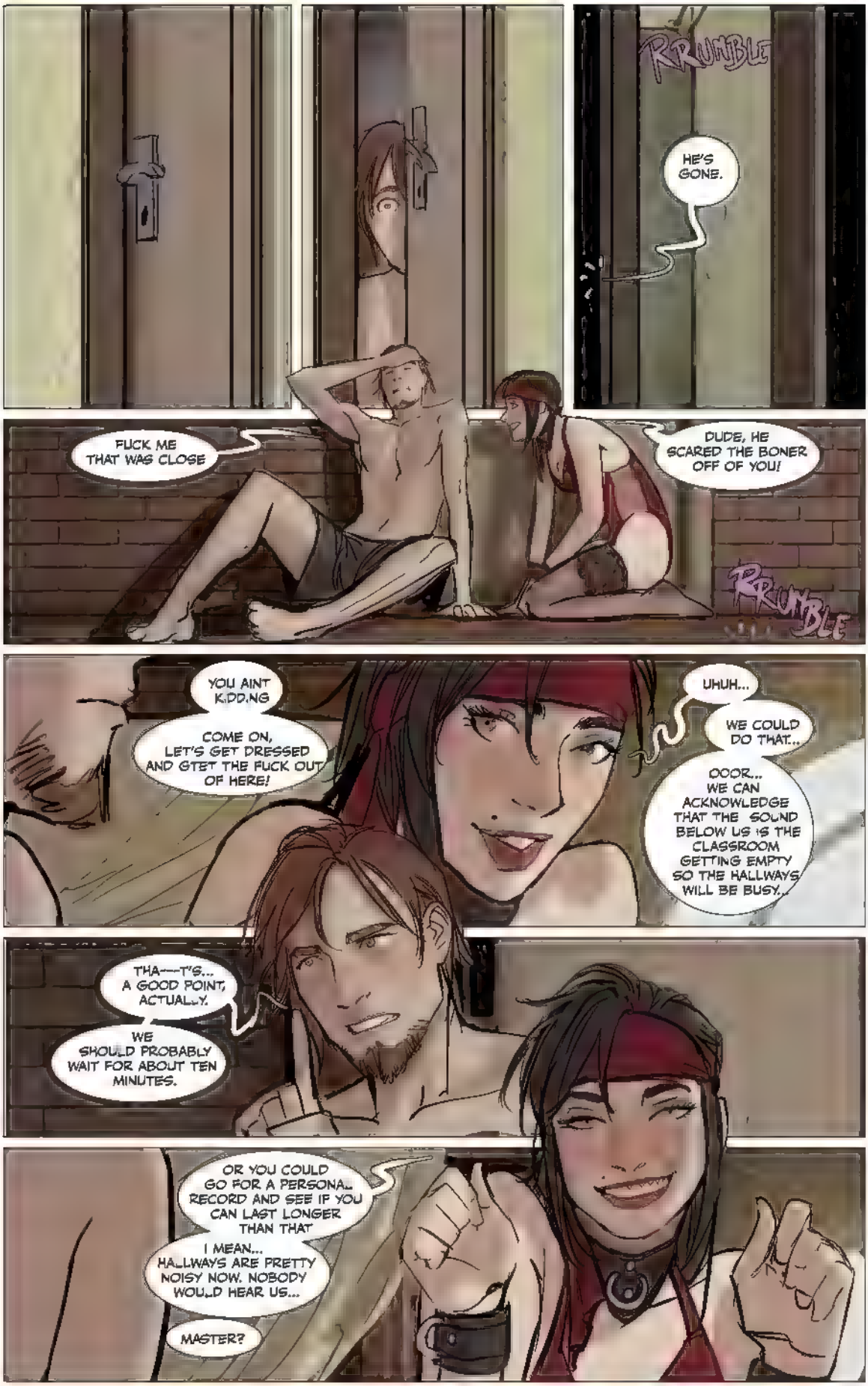
HM...
THUDUMPADEDUMP
WHAT THE HELL?
BWAH!
HRMF...
OUT OF THE WAY

SO...
WE HAD A SIMPLE SET OF RULES, BUT ONE OF THE BIG ONES WAS, WE DON'T DO ATTIC STUFF WHEN THE CLASSROOM BELOW US IS OCCUPIED
IT WAS A GOOD RULE. A SMART RULE.
BUT WE WEREN'T SMART WHEN WE WERE IN THE ATTIC.
WE WERE HORNY.
HORNY PEOPLE OFTEN MAKE BAD DECISIONS
THEY MAKE STUPID COMPROMISES.
HORNY PEOPLE MAKE MISTAKES
LIKE THE MISTAKE OF ASSUMING THAT THE OLD FILING CLOSET STASHED ON THE ATTIC FOR GOD KNOWS HOW LONG WAS STURDY
SNAP
KRAKK

NATURALLY, WHAT FOLLOWED NEXT WAS THE SOUND OF WORLDS LOUDEST PILE OF DOMINOS COLLAPSING
WAH!!
THUDUMPADEDUMP
DUDE! WHAT THE FUCK?
OH, GOD! ALLY!!
ARE YOU OKAY? FUCKING HELL ONE OFTHE LEGS MUST HAVE BROKEN OFF
YOU THINK?
ARE YOU HURT?
JUST MY BUTT, BUT I DON'T THINK THAT'S FROM THE FALL.
DAMN!
WE REALLY SHOULD GIVE ALL THIS OLD STUFF A THOROUGH CHECKUP
LIKE... NEXT LEVEL CHECKUP
UHUH...
SAY, ALAN.. THIS WAS PRETTY FUCKING LOUD
ALRIGHT, WHO WAS IT???
EEP!

I KNOW I HEARD SOMEONE UP HERE! I SWEAR IF I CATCH ANY OF YOU SMOKING IN THIS HALLWAY THERE'LL BE HELL TO PAY!

HM...
TA-TLACK
TA-TLACK
SCOUNDREL HOOLIGANS.

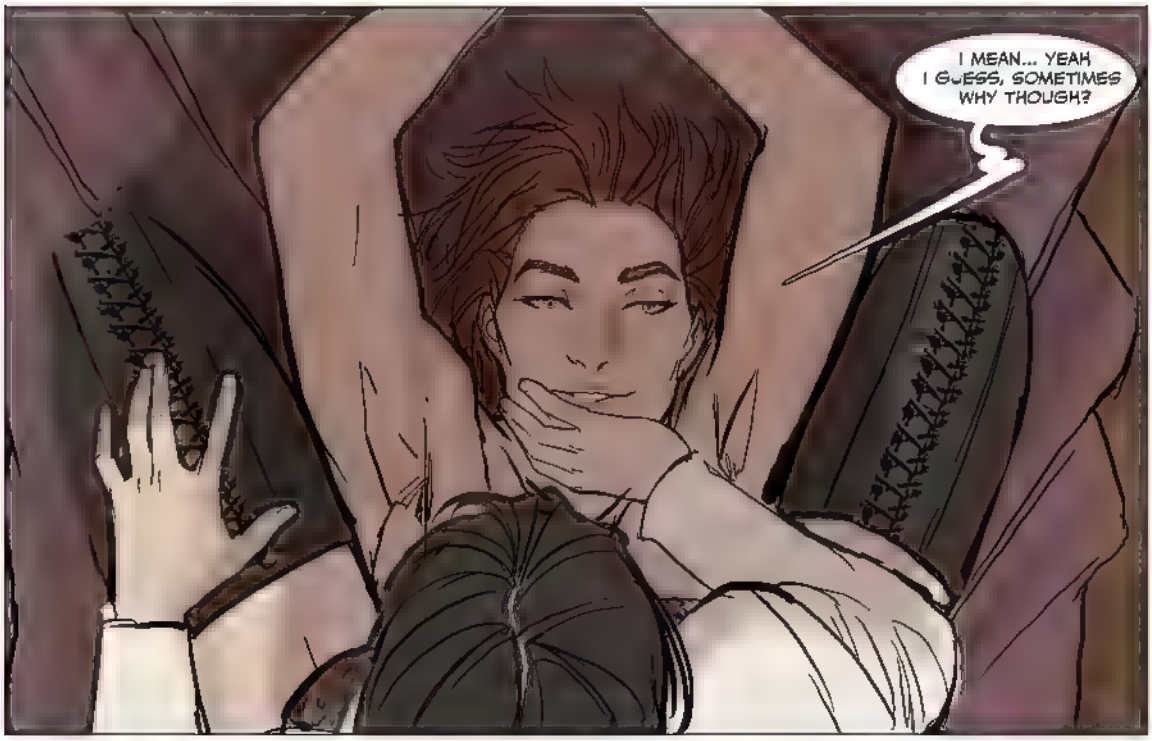

HE'S GONE.
FUCK ME THAT WAS CLOSE
DUDE, HE SCARED THE BONER OFF OF YOU!
YOU AINT KIDDING
COME ON, LET'S GET DRESSED AND GTET THE FUCK OUT OF HERE!
UHUH...
WE COULD DO THAT...
OOOR... WE CAN ACKNOWLEDGE THAT THE SOUND BELOW US IS THE CLASSROOM GETTING EMPTY SO THE HALLWAYS WILL BE BUSY...
THA---T'S... A GOOD POINT, ACTUALLY.
WE SHOULD PROBABLY WAIT FOR ABOUT TEN MINUTES.
OR YOU COULD GO FOR A PERSONAL RECORD AND SEE IF YOU CAN LAST LONGER THAN THAT
I MEAN... HALLWAYS ARE PRETTY NOISY NOW. NOBODY WOULD HEAR US...
MASTER?

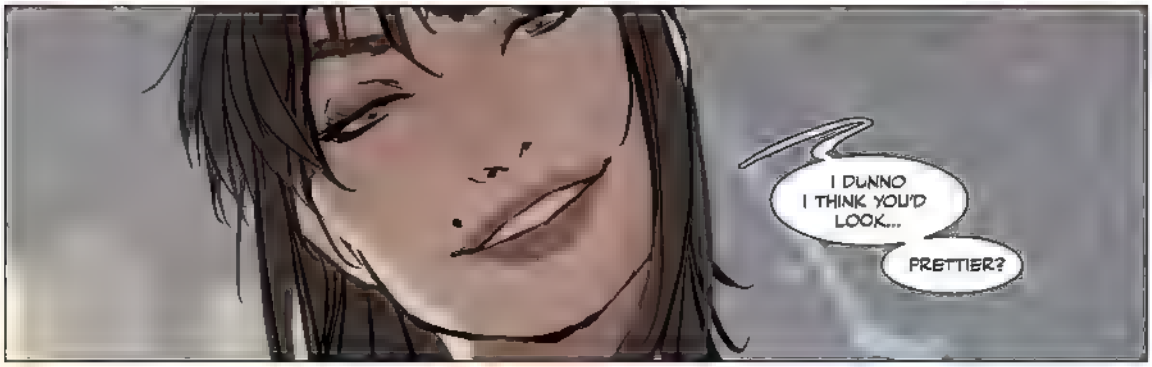
YOU'RE GETTING OFF ON THIS, AREN'T YOU?
A LITTLE!
AND SO, INSTEAD OF LEAVING, WE STAYED. JUST ANOTHER LITTLE COMPROMISE
ANOTHER LITTLE RISK. AND AFTER ALL WHY NOT? WE WERE ALREADY THERE AND READY...
AND OH SO ENTHUSIASTIC.
IN FACT, I WAS DOING MY BEST TO CONTROL MY PERSONAL ENTHUSIASM.
93 BOTTLES OF BEER ON THE WALL, 93 BOTTLES OF BEER
TAKE ONE DOWN AND PASS IT AROUND, 92 BOTTLES OF BEER ON THE WALL.
92 BOTTLES OF BEER ON THE WALL, 92 BOTTLES OF BEER
TAKE ONE DOWN AND PASS IT AROUND, 91 BOTTLES OF BEER ON THE WALL.
91 BOTTLES OF BEER ON THE WALL, 91 BOTTLES OF BEER
TAKE ONE DOWN AND PASS IT AROUND, 90 BOTTLES OF BEER ON THE WALL.
90 BOTTLES OF BEER ON THE WALL, 90 BOTTLES OF BEER
TAKE ONE DOWN AND PASS IT AROUND, 89 BOTTLES OF BEER ON THE WALL.
89 BOTTLES OF BEER
88 BOTTLES OF BEER ON THE WALL.
88 BOTTLES OF BEER
BOTTLES OF BEER ON THE WALL.
87 BOTTLES OF BEER
BOTTLES OF BEER ON THE WALL.
86 BOTTLES OF BEER
BOTTLES OF BEER ON THE WALL.
85 BOTTLES OF BEER
BOTTLES OF BEER ON THE WALL.
MNNNH!
MMMHH!
WEFF!!!

ANYHOW, THAT DAY PASSED. THE NEXT ARRIVED AND FOUND US A LITTLE BIT BOLDER AND A LITTLE BIT WISER.
WE DOUBLED DOWN ON OUR SUPPIES OF ROPES AND PACKING TAPE, AND FASTENED ANYTHING THAT COULD BE FASTENED.
SOME OF IT WITH A FAIR BIT OF STYLE I MIGHT ADD.

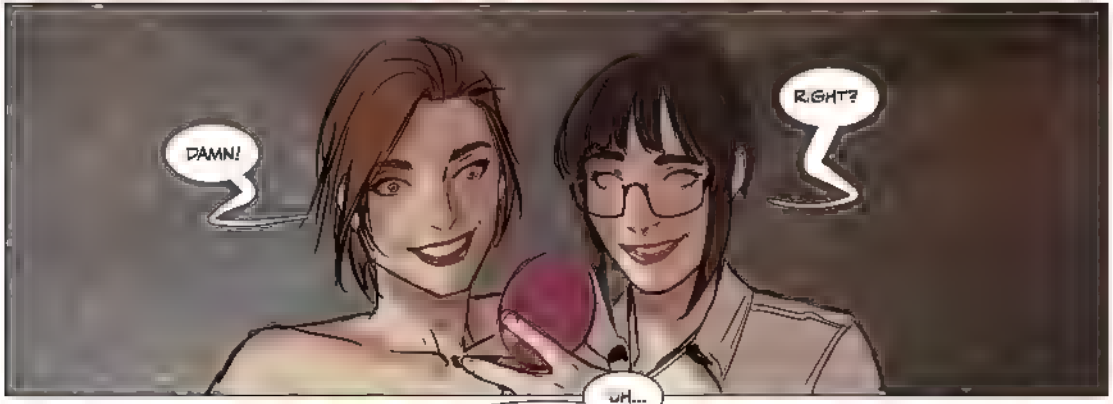
AND AFTER THAT... WELL, THE AUTUMN WAS MILD AND THE COLLEGE LESSONS SLOW... POINT IS MORE AND MORE WE'D FEEL THE ATTIC CALLING TO US
A SCHEDULE COMPROMISE HERE, AND A SCHEDULE COMPROMISE THERE
AND WHAT STARTED OFF AS ONE MISSED LESSON SOON TURNED TO FIVE... TEN... TWENTY...
SHALL WE?
AFTER YOU, MISTRESS!
AND YET . WE DIDN'T CARE. WE EAGERLY MADE THOSE COMPROMISES.

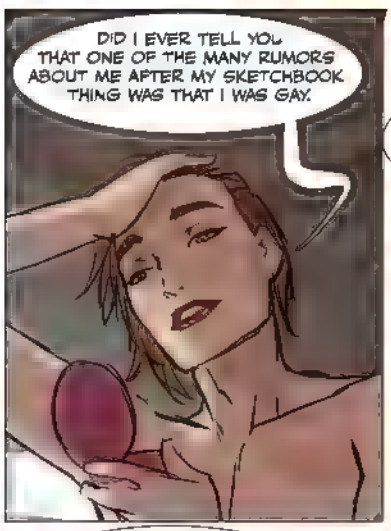
IN FACT... AS FAR AS COMPROMISES GO, WE WERE JUST GETTING STARTED.
DUDE, EVER THINK OF SHAVING THAT GOATEE THING OFF?

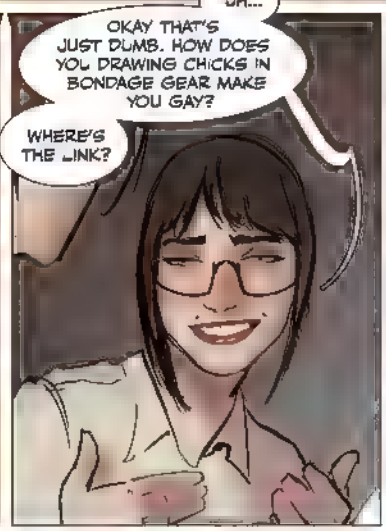

I MEAN... YEAH I GUESS, SOMETIMES WHY THOUGH?

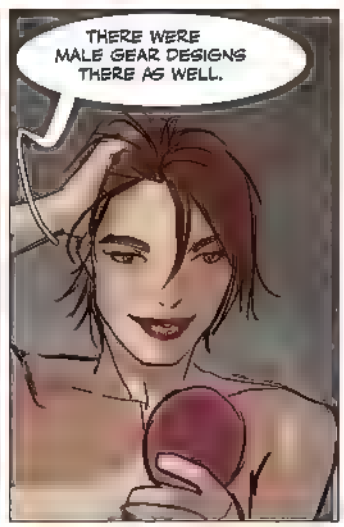

I DUNNO I THINK YOU'D LOOK...
PRETTIER?

A WEEK LATER...
YYYUP!
I WAS RIGHT! YOU DO LOOK PRETTIER!
IN FACT, I KINDA WISH WE HAD SOME STUFF YOU COULD WEAR AS WELL...
YEAH, WELL DUDE GEAR SUCKS ANYWAYS
HARDLY A BIG LOSS.
I WASN'T TALKING ABOUT DUDE CLOTHES
AH... SO SHOULD I ADD THIS TO YOUR LIST OF KINKS?
WE'LL SEE...
DEPENDS IF I LIKE THE END RESULT
YOU KNOW... THAT'S NOT HALF BAD!
REALLY?
YEAH! HOLD ON!

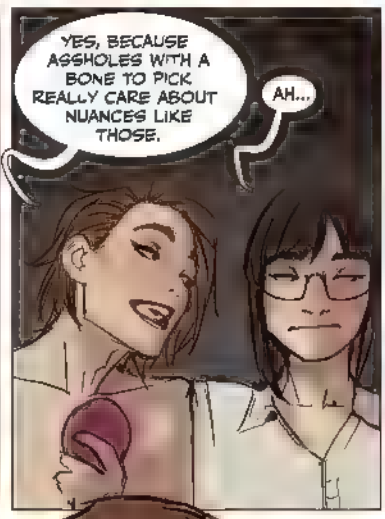

DAMN!
RIGHT?

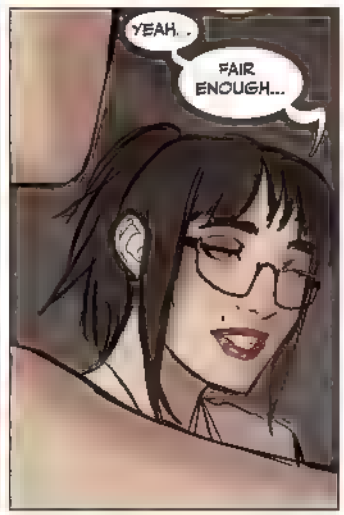

DID I EVER TELL YOU THAT ONE OF THE MANY RUMORS ABOUT ME AFTER MY SKETCHBOOK THING WAS THAT I WAS GAY.

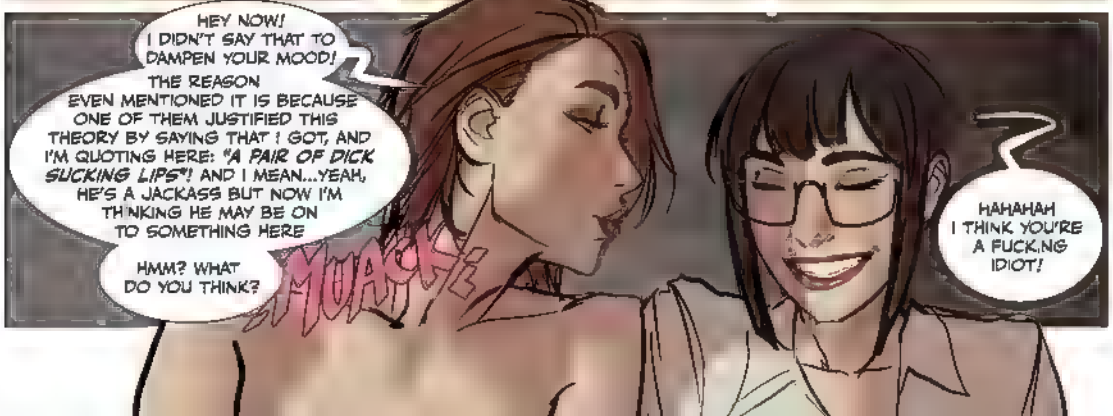

UH...
OKAY THAT'S JUST DUMB. HOW DOES YOU DRAWING CHICKS IN BONDAGE GEAR MAKE YOU GAY?
WHERE'S THE LINK?

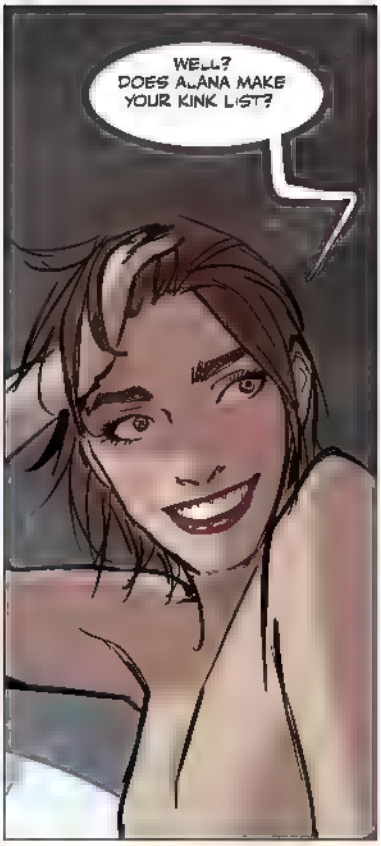

THERE WERE MALE GEAR DESIGNS THERE AS WELL.

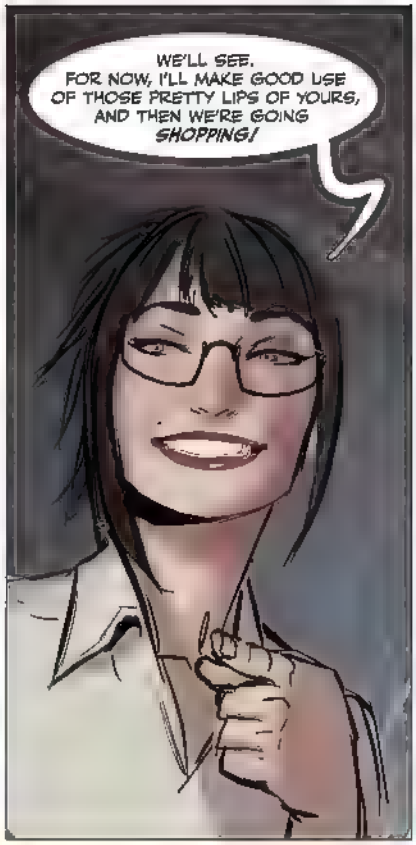
RIGHT... BUT STILL AT MOST THEY COULD MAKE A CASE FOR YOU BEING LIKE... BISEXUAL OR SOMETHING?


YES, BECAUSE ASSHOLES WITH A BONE TO PICK REALLY CARE ABOUT NUANCES LIKE THOSE.
AH...


YEAH...
FAIR ENOUGH...


HEY NOW! I DIDN'T SAY THAT TO DAMPEN YOUR MOOD! THE REASON EVEN MENTIONED IT IS BECAUSE ONE OF THEM JUSTIFIED THIS THEORY BY SAYING THAT I GOT, AND I'M QUOTING HERE: *"A PAIR OF DICK SUCKING LIPS"*! AND I MEAN...YEAH, HE'S A JACKASS BUT NOW I'M THINKING HE MAY BE ON TO SOMETHING HERE
HMM? WHAT DO YOU THINK?
MUACK!
HAHAHAH I THINK YOU'RE A FUCKING IDIOT!





SOOO... IT DIDN'T STOP WITH MAKE UP ALONE...

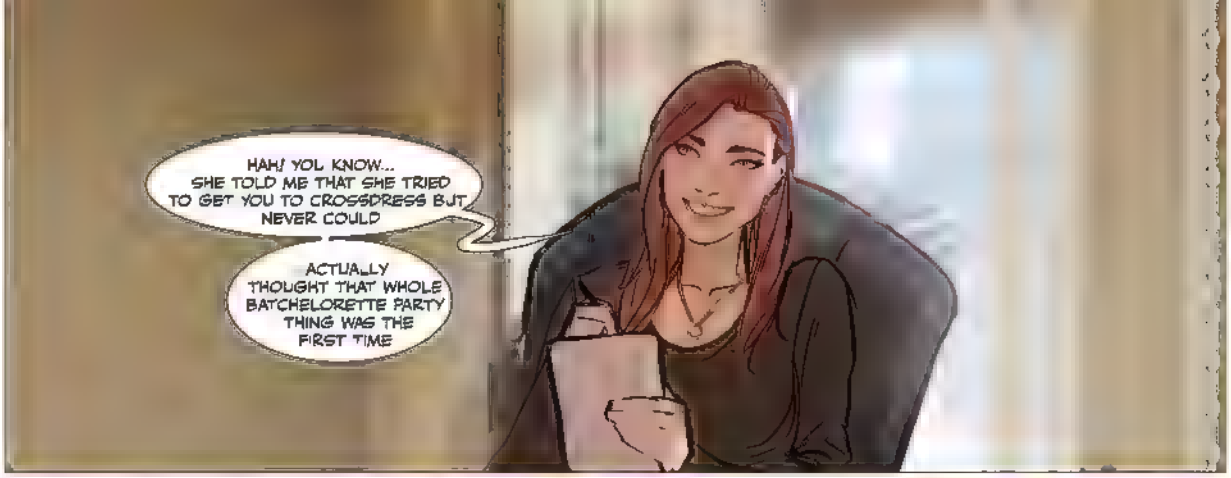
AFTER ALL, IT WAS THE END OF OCTOBER OR AS WE CALLED IT, THE FETISHIST GARAGE SALE MONTH.

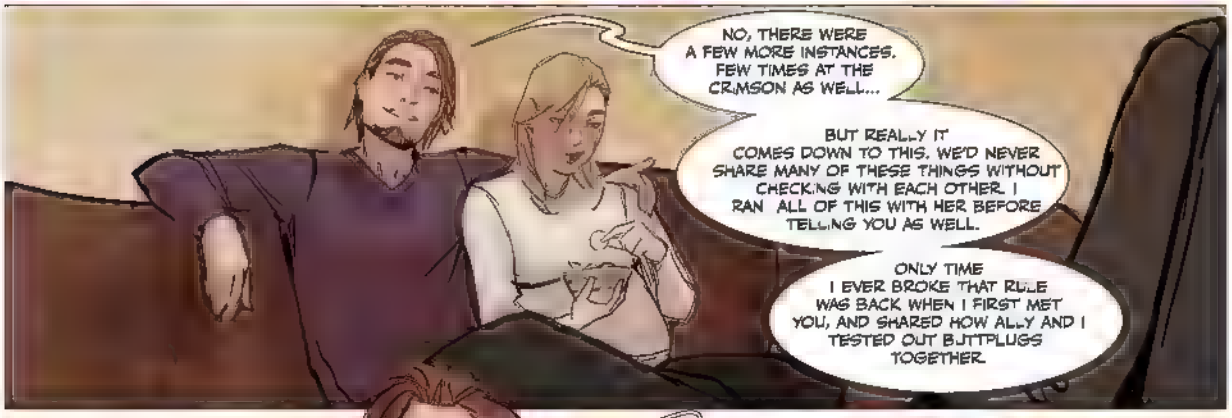
AFTER ALL WHEN YOU'RE ON A BUDGET, AND LOOKING FOR SOME KINKY OUTFITS, LOOK NO FURTHER THAN HALLOWEEN WHEN EVERYTHING UNDER THE SUN HAS A SEXY VARIANT!

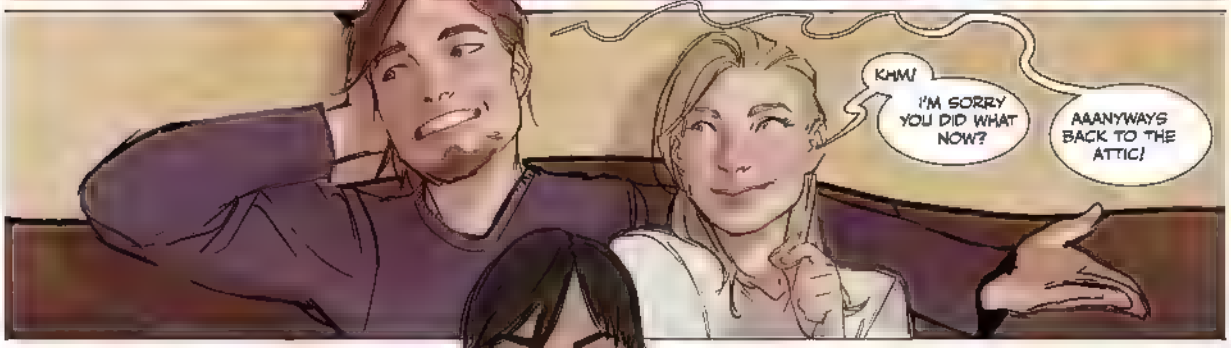
POINT IS, THAT MONTH WE CUT DONW ON POINTLESS COSTS LIKE... FOOD... AND TREATED OURSELVES WITH CHEAP PVC, AND CHEAPER SPANDEX.

DUDE! CAT EARS!
DUDE! OPERA GLOVES!
NICE!
OKAY, WHICH ONE DO YOU THINK FITS ME BETTER?
I'D SAY MAID, BUT THE CAT ONE'S PROBABLY SMARTER. IT CAN GO DOMME OR SUB!
CAT IT IS!
THEN I SUPPOSE...
THAT MAKES YOU THE MAID!
NO FUCKING WAY!
OH COME ON I'D WEAR IT FOR YOU.
IT'S EMBARASSING.
SO? LITERALLY EVERYTHING WE DO IS EMBARASSING. THAT'S HALF THE FUN!
...BUT OKAY YOU CAN JUST SAY MY SAFEWORD AND I'LL DROP IT.
WE'LL TAKE THIS ONE TOO!

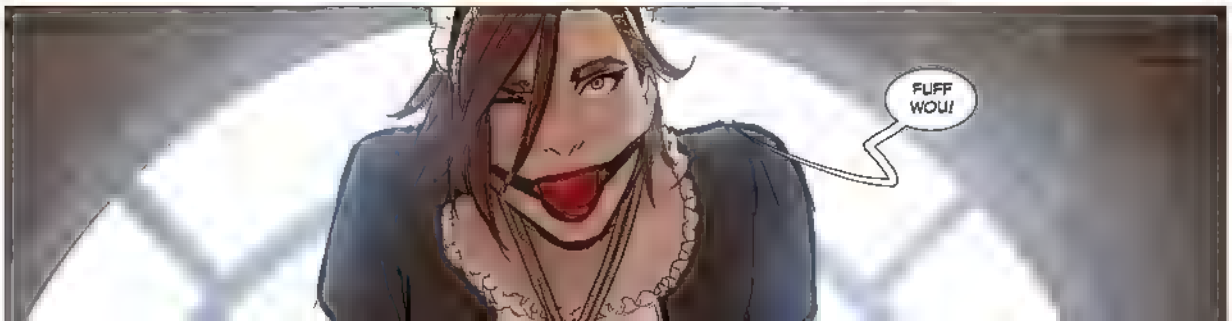
OKAY, IN MY DEFENSE ..
SUNSTONE IS A REALLY STUPID SAFEWORD!


HAH! YOU KNOW... SHE TOLD ME THAT SHE TRIED TO GET YOU TO CROSSDRESS BUT NEVER COULD
ACTUALLY THOUGHT THAT WHOLE BATCHELORETTE PARTY THING WAS THE FIRST TIME


NO, THERE WERE A FEW MORE INSTANCES. FEW TIMES AT THE CRIMSON AS WELL...
BUT REALLY IT COMES DOWN TO THIS. WE'D NEVER SHARE MANY OF THESE THINGS WITHOUT CHECKING WITH EACH OTHER. I RAN ALL OF THIS WITH HER BEFORE TELLING YOU AS WELL.
ONLY TIME I EVER BROKE THAT RULE WAS BACK WHEN I FIRST MET YOU, AND SHARED HOW ALLY AND I TESTED OUT BUTTPLUGS TOGETHER.

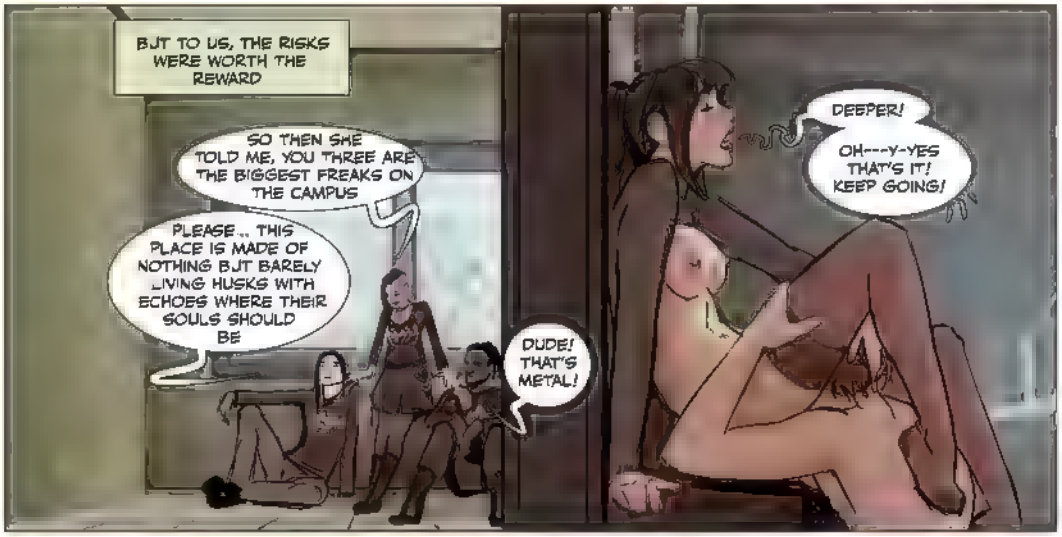

KHM!
I'M SORRY YOU DID WHAT NOW?
AAANYWAYS BACK TO THE ATTIC!

THERE WAS SOMETHING TO THE FACT WE HAD OUTFITS TO WEAR. CHEAP, SURE, EMBARASING? KINDA. BUT IT MADE THE WOLE THING FEEL SOMEHOW MORE.... OFFICIAL. SO WE IMMORTALIZED THE MOMENT BY STARTING A NEW TRADITION THAT LASTS TO THIS DAY.
OH THIS ONE IS GONNA BE MY NEW SCREENSAVER!


FUFF WOU!

I SUPPOSE THOSE OUTFITS WERE OUR FIRST LOSS OF BALANCE AT THE EDGE OF THAT SLIPPERY SLOPE OF KINK. SEE, IF THERE'S ONE THING I LEARNED ABOUT FETISHES, IT'S THIS: YOU GOTTA CONTROL THAT SHIT! OTHERWISE IT HAS WAYS OF QUIETLY EVOLVING INTO AN OBSESSION
AND YEAH. THAT'S WHAT HAPPENNED TO US.
VERY QUICKLY WE FOUND OURSELVES GOING THE WAY OF YOUR AVERAGE DISNEY PRINCESS AND WANTING A WHOLE LOT FUCKING MORE.
BUT TO GET MORE WE HAD TO EARN MORE... THIS MEANT MORE GIGS, MORE HOURS AT THE STORE... AND A WHOLE LOT LESS FREE TIME TOGETHER.
IT WAS YET ANOTHER COMPROMISE WE WERE ALL TOO EAGER TO MAKE.

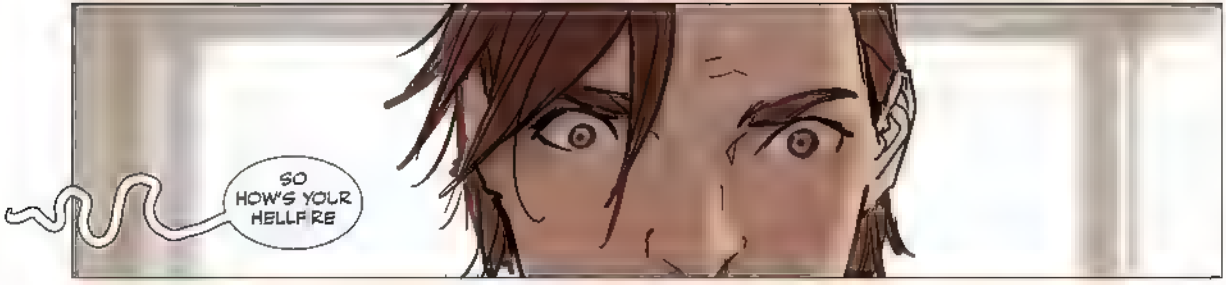
THIS , OF COURSE MADE US VALUE OUR ATTIC TIMES EVEN MORE, TO THE POINT THAT WE TOOK MORE AND MORE RISKS TO GET THERE
CRAP, I THINK SOMEONE'S COMING!
YEAH, US!
COME ON!


BUT TO US, THE RISKS WERE WORTH THE REWARD
SO THEN SHE TOLD ME, YOU THREE ARE THE BIGGEST FREAKS ON THE CAMPUS
PLEASE... THIS PLACE IS MADE OF NOTHING BUT BARELY LIVING HUSKS WITH ECHOES WHERE THEIR SOULS SHOULD BE
DUDE! THAT'S METAL!
DEEPER!
OH---Y-YES THAT'S IT! KEEP GOING!

HONESTLY, WE WERE SPIRALLING OUT OF CONTROL AND I GENUINELY THINK WE WOULDHAVE GOTTEN CAUGHT IN THE END, IF IT WASN'T FOR THAT ONE DAY IN NOVEMBER...

THE DAY OF...
THE BURRITO!
REGULAR?
YOU KNOW WHAT? GIVE ME THE HELLFIRE!
YOU SURE?
YEAH! LIGHT ME UP!
WELL LOOK AT MR MONEYBAGS. YOU KNOW YOU CUT DOWN ON A FEW OF THOSE AND WE CAN AFFORD SOME DECENT TOYS.

HEY, FUCK OFF I DON'T HAVE A MOM MAKING ME LUNCH AT HOME! I'M HUNGRY!
ANYWAYS, WANT SOME?
ALAN, THAT THING IS CALLED THE HELLFIRE. THAT'S NOT THE KIND OF ASS PAIN I'M GOING FOR TODAY!
YOUR LOSS!

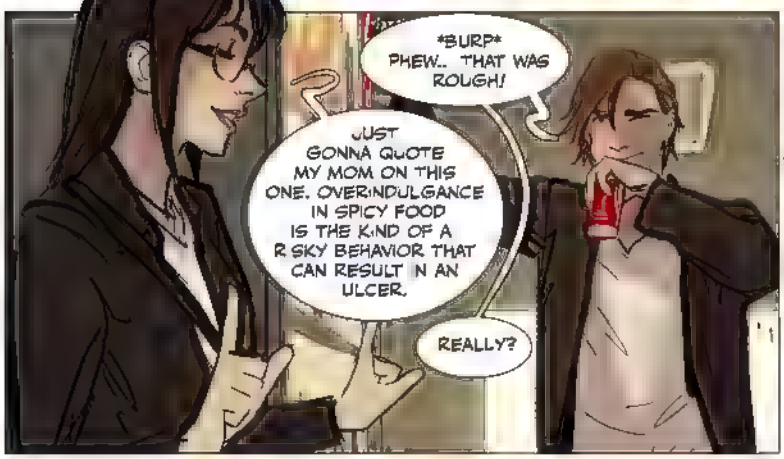

SO HOW'S YOUR HELLFIRE

KOFF A BIT INTENSE BUT GOOD! SURE YOU DON'T WANT SOME?
AND DEPRIVE A MASOCHIST OF HIS PUNISHMENT? WHAT KIND OF A DOMME WOULD I BE THEN?
FUCK OFF!

STILL GOOD?
KHM Y-YEAH .. I MAY NEED A SODA

FUCKING HELL, MY EARS ARE ON FIRE
YOU KNOW YOU DIDN'T HAVE TO FINISH IT!
KHH-- I'LL BE FINE. PLUS I PAID FOR IT!

FUCKING DUDES... SWEAR.
SLUSH


BURP PHEW.. THAT WAS ROUGH!
JUST GONNA QUOTE MY MOM ON THIS ONE. OVERINDULGANCE IN SPICY FOOD IS THE KIND OF A RISKY BEHAVIOR THAT CAN RESULT IN AN ULCER.
REALLY?

YOU OF ALL PEOPLE ARE GONNA LECTURE ME ON RISKY BEHAVIOR?

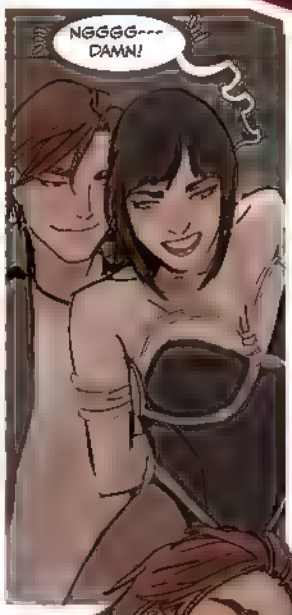
OF COURSE. I GOT A PRIVATE LECTURE HALL UP IN THE ATTIC.

YOU GOT A LECTURE HALL?
PRETTY SURE IT'S MY TURN TO BE THE "TEACHER"
NOT IF I PULL A REAL DICK MOVE AND LOCK YOU OUT OF THE "CLASSROOM" FIRST!
HAH.. FUNNY
ALLY?
HEY, WE HAVE A SCHEDULE DAMN IT!!!
ALLY, COME ON! THE FUCK ARE YOU DOING!?
EARNING MY DETENTION!

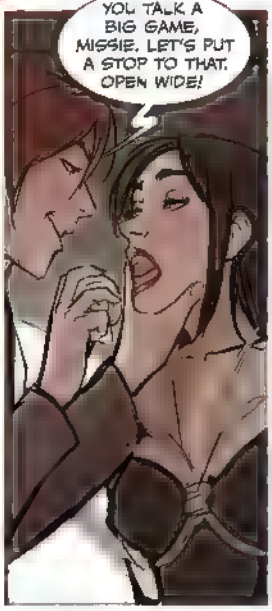
EARNING YOUR DETENTION.. HEH.
YOU LITTLE BRAT!
HEY, I KNOW WHAT GETS YOU RUNNING... THIS TIME LITERALLY

FAIR ENOUGH.
SO YOU'RE REALLY GONNA KEEP YOUR JACKET ON?
HEY, I DON'T HAVE A FANCY SEXY OUTFIT AND.. YKNOW.. AT LEAST IT'S LEATHER
THAT COUNTS FOR SOMETHING!

PLAY THE CARDS YOU GOT, HUH?
SOMETHING LIKE THAT OKAY, TEST IT.


NGGGG--- DAMN!

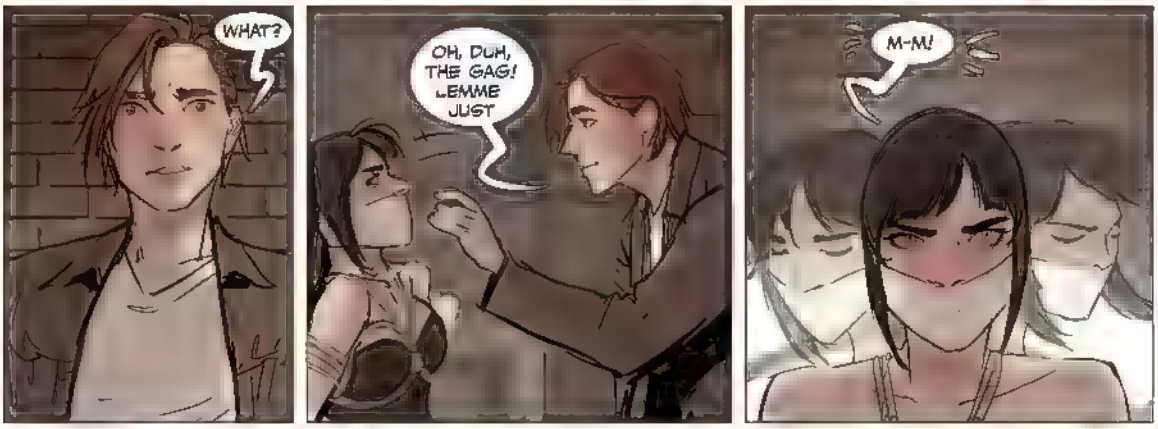
NOT BAD, ROOKIE!

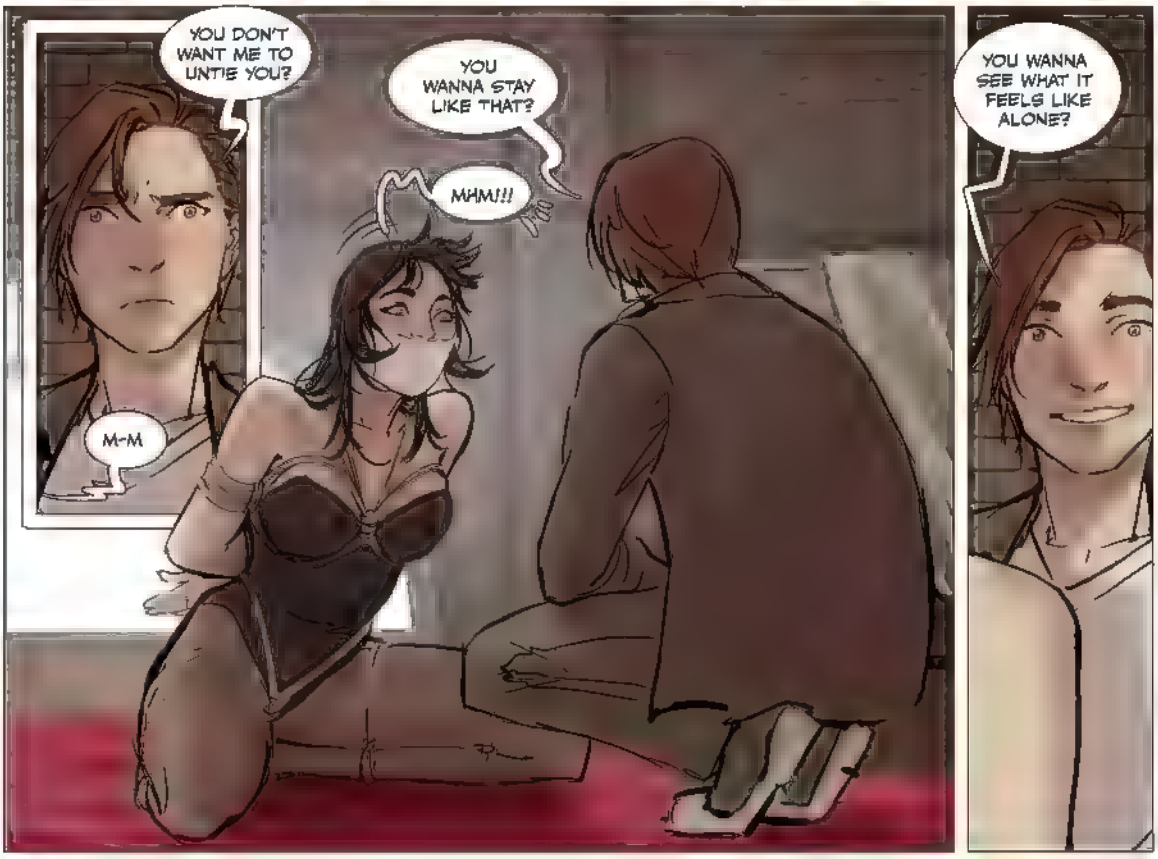

YOU TALK A BIG GAME, MISSIE. LET'S PUT A STOP TO THAT. OPEN WIDE!

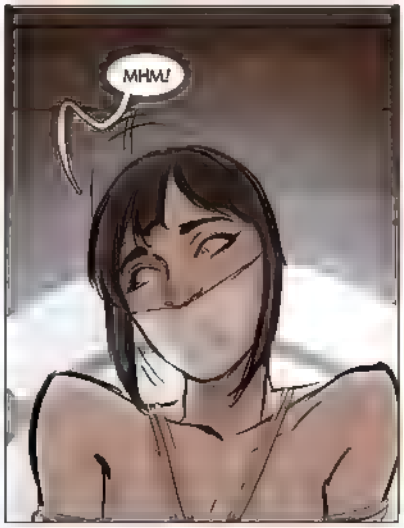
THERE WE GO FINALLY SOME PEACE AND QUIET
MPF MM

OKAY, LET ME GET A GOOD LOOK AT YOU
WOW... YOU KNOW I'M NOT USUALLY ONE FOR THESE KINDS OF GAGS BUT YOU LOOK STUNNING IN THIS ALMOST VINTAG--
OH GHAAAWD
FWAF?
MMH?
OH GOD I TH NK IT'S THE BURRITO!
NNNNGH FUCK ME, THIS MUST BE WHAT ENEMA PLAY FEEL S LIKE!
MH?
OH DON'T YOU GET ANY IDEAS!
GRROWL

OH GOD I GOTTA GO!!!
SCISSORS!
WHERE S DID I LEAVE---
A-HA!
OH. HERE. DON'T MOVE! LEMME CUT THE...
M-MM!!


WHAT?
OH, DUH, THE GAG! LEMME JUST
M-M!


YOU DON'T WANT ME TO UNTIE YOU?
M-M
YOU WANNA STAY LIKE THAT?
MHM!!!
YOU WANNA SEE WHAT IT FEELS LIKE ALONE?

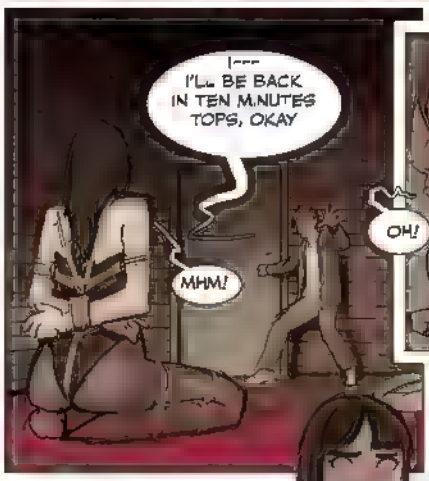

MHM!

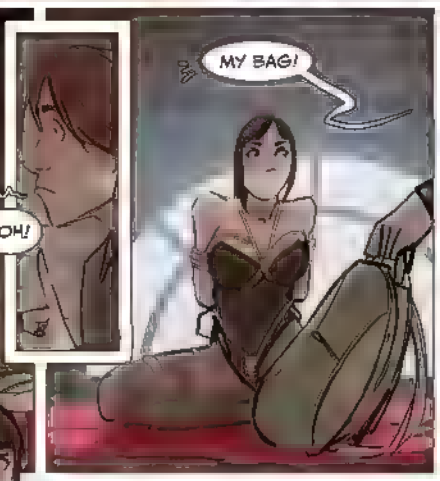
HOW LOVELY...

LOOKS LIKE I GOT MYSELF A DAMSEL IN---

GMMMMMNNN!!!!

SIGH


I--- I'LL BE BACK IN TEN MINUTES TOPS, OKAY
MHM!

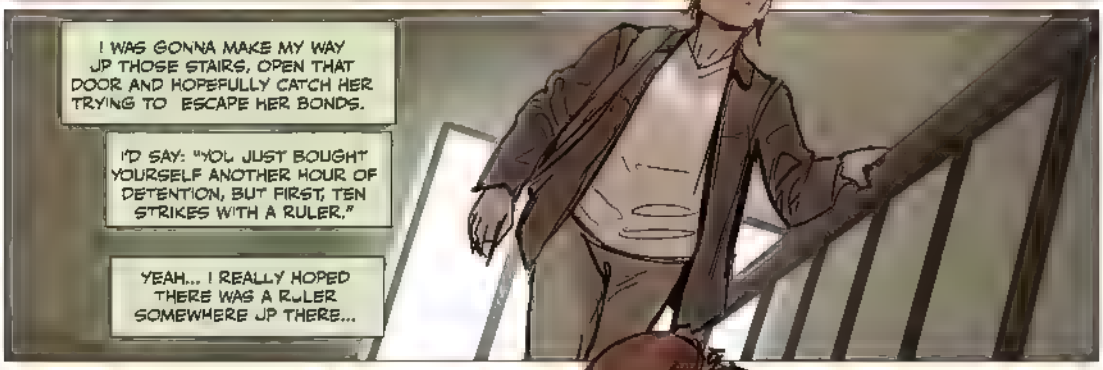

OH!
MY BAG!

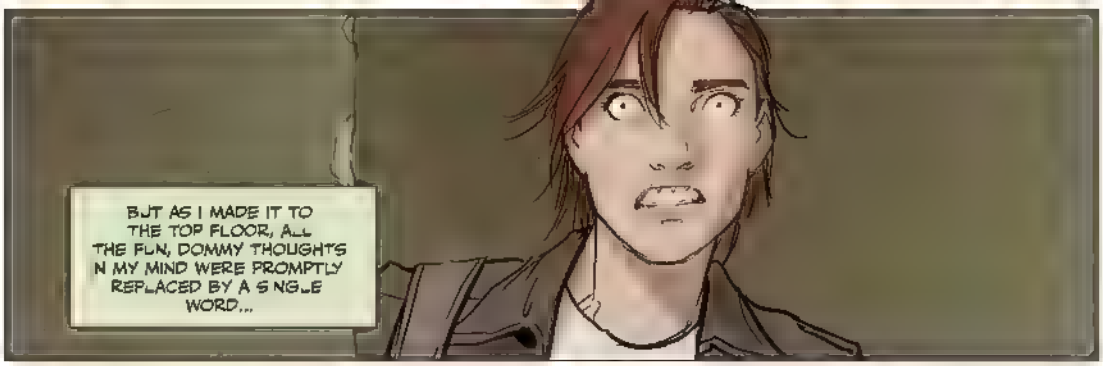
WAW?

I BRING MY OWN TOILET PAPER IT'S A LONG STORY NOTIMEFORITNOW!!! WON'TBELONGBYEE!!!!

AND THEN... WELL, WHAT FOLLOWED WAS A WHOLE LOT OF STRAINING BEHIND CLOSED DOORS.
ME DOING... THE OBVIOUS
AND ALLY... WELL, IT TURNS OUT, ALLY HAD HER OWN REASONS FOR WANTING TO STAY TIED UP LIKE THAT.
I MEAN, SURE SHE WANTED TO FEEL WHAT IT FELT LIKE TO BE LEFT ALONE LIKE IN ONE OF HER ONLINE STORIES.
BUT EVEN MORE SO, SHE WANTED TO SEE IF SHE COULD GET HERSELF OUT OF MY RIG BEFORE I CAME BACK.
BUT THE FACT WAS, I DID A GOOD JOB WITH IT ALL THAT DAY. A REALLY GOOD JOB....
HUFF
HUFF
SIGH

N FACT, UPON LEAVING THE SCENE OF A NATURAL DISASTER I CAUSED IN THAT TOILET, I DISTINCTLY REMEMBER FEELING REAL FUCKING GOOD ABOUT MYSELF.
I MEAN, THERE WAS SOMETHING EXCITINGLY ELECTRIC ABOUT THE IDEA OF HER BOUND AND GAGGED LIKE THAT WAITING FOR ME TO RETURN

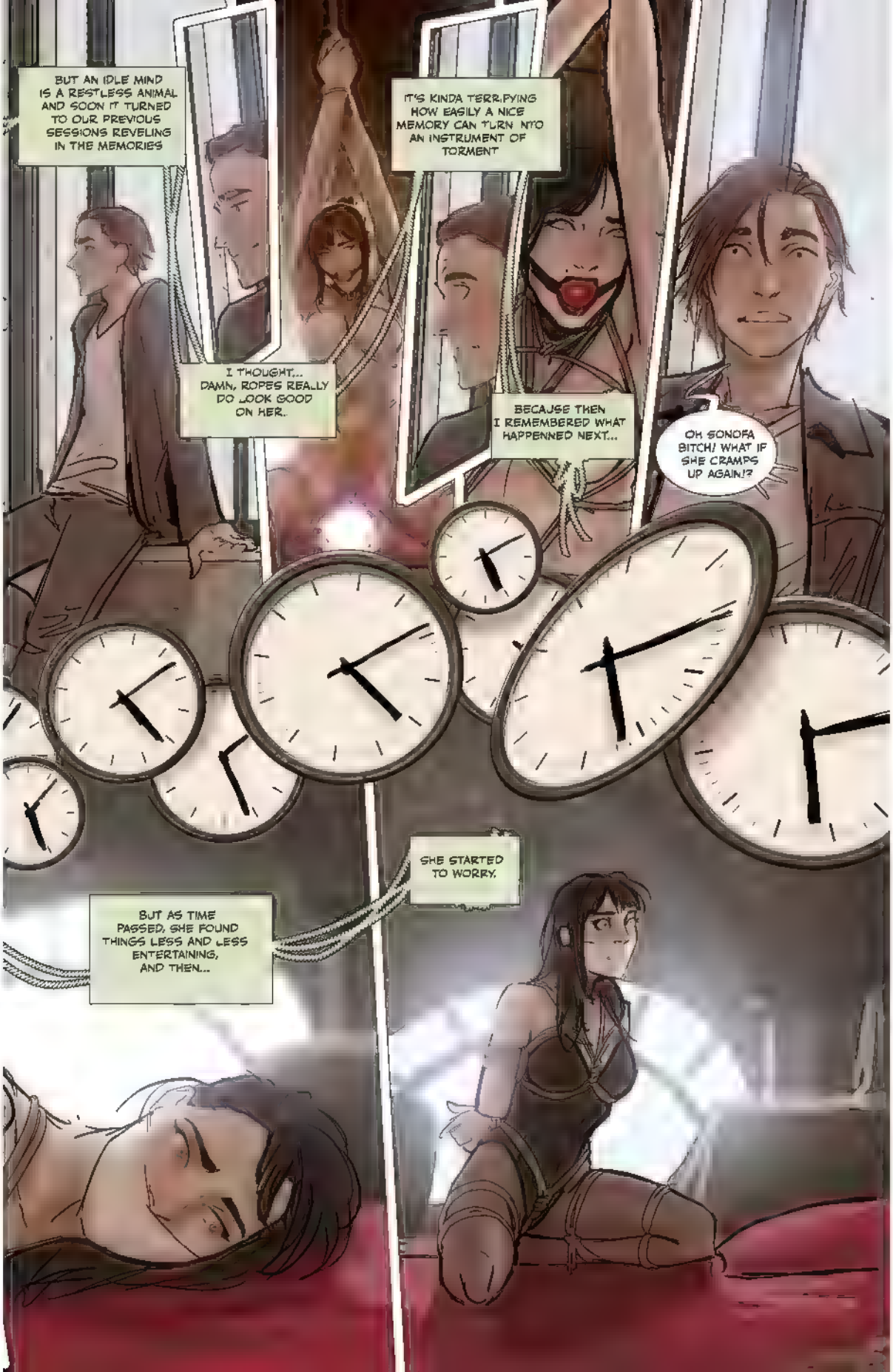

I WAS GONNA MAKE MY WAY UP THOSE STAIRS, OPEN THAT DOOR AND HOPEFULLY CATCH HER TRYING TO ESCAPE HER BONDS.
I'D SAY: "YOU JUST BOUGHT YOURSELF ANOTHER HOUR OF DETENTION, BUT FIRST, TEN STRIKES WITH A RULER."
YEAH... I REALLY HOPED THERE WAS A RULER SOMEWHERE UP THERE...


BUT AS I MADE IT TO THE TOP FLOOR, ALL THE FUN, DOMMY THOUGHTS IN MY MIND WERE PROMPTLY REPLACED BY A SINGLE WORD...

FUUUUUUUUUCK!

KINDA FUNNY THE STUFF YOU REMEMBER ABOUT THE BIG MOMENTS OF YOUR LIFE
LIKE...
I REMEMBER THE ACTUAL SONG THAT THE JANITOR WHISTLED AS HE WAS WORKING. AMERICAN PIE.
I REMEMBER THE EXACT TIME OF IT ALL
AND I REMEMBER THIS STRANGE CALM OVER THE WHOLE FLOOR
I SWEAR, IF IT WASN'T SO FRUSTRATING, THE EXPERIENCE WOULD HAVE BEEN DOWNRIGHT RELAXING.
THE UPPER FLOOR OF THE COLLEGE WAS ALL BUT PERFECTLY SILENT, WITH ONLY THE SOUND OF AMERICAN PIE AND THE INCESSENT TICKING OF THE CLOCK BREAKING THE QUIET

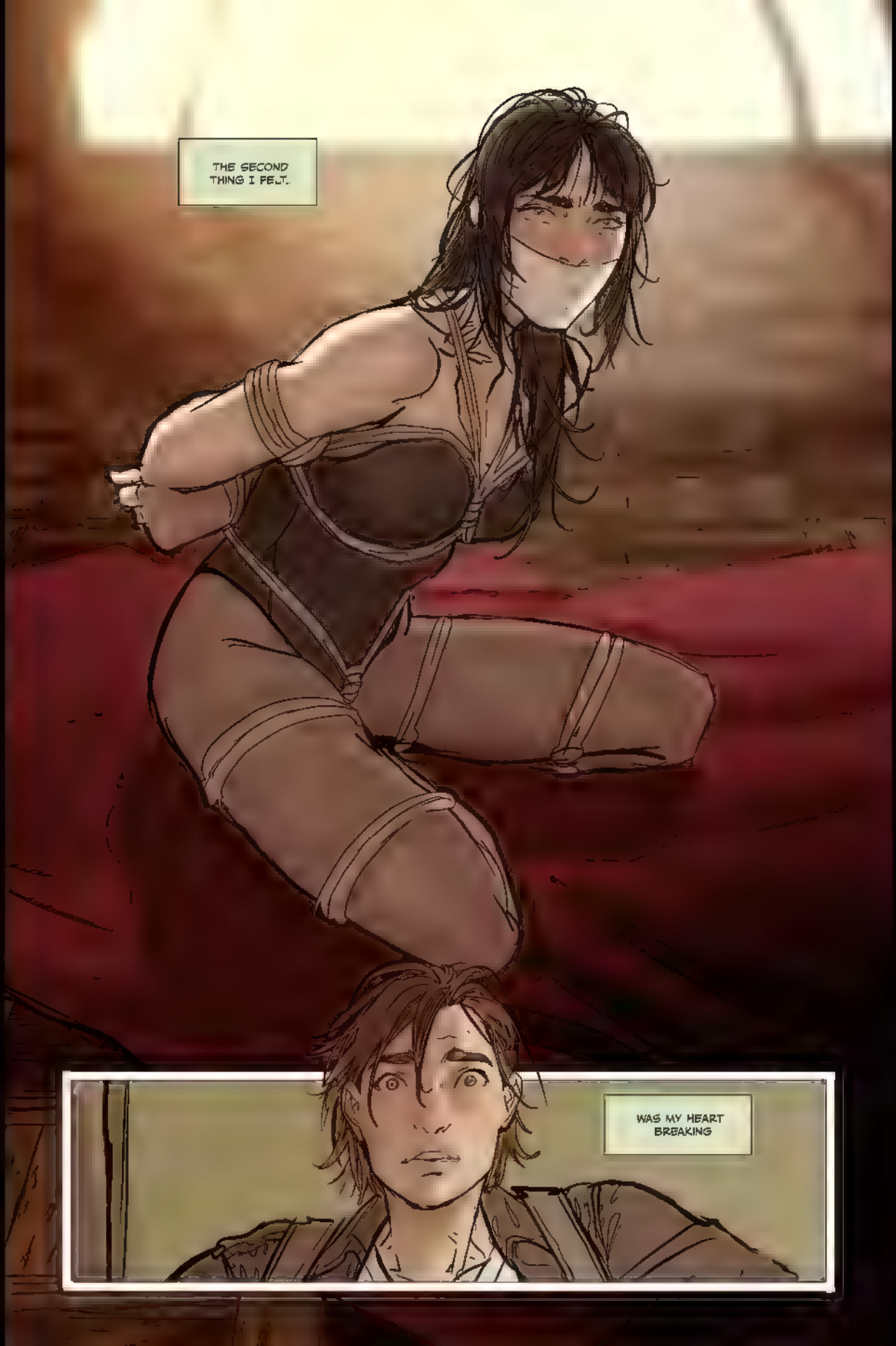
I DIDN'T PANIC AT FIRST. I FIGURED WHATEVER BUSINESS THE JANITOR HAD IT COULDN'T TAKE LONGER THAN TEN MINUTES.
SO FOR A WHILE I LET MY MIND WANDER.
AT FIRST I WAS INDULGING N THOUGHTS OF WHAT WAS TO COME. FUN THOUGHTS OF DETENTIONS AND OTHE RPUNISHMENTS
NOW, ON ALLY'S SIDE OF THINGS, AND I KNOW THIS BECAUSE SHE TOLD ME, SHE SPENT THE FIRST FIFTEEN MINUTES OF HER SOLACE THOROUGHLY TESTING HER BONDS AND TRYING TO DETERMINE F ONE COULD GET OFF BY USING THE CROTCH ROPE ALONE
YOU KNOW... DOING SCIENCE AND SHIT.
MMH—
AFTER SHE EXHAUSTED HERSELF WITH THAT, SHE STARTED AMUSING HERSELF IMAGINING THE HELL I WAS GOING THROUGH WITH THE HELLFIRE MAKING ITS BLISTERING EXIT
OH DEAR HEAVENS! GET OUT OF ME , DEMON!
MPFFFT


BUT AN IDLE MIND IS A RESTLESS ANIMAL AND SOON IT TURNED TO OUR PREVIOUS SESSIONS REVELING IN THE MEMORIES
IT'S KINDA TERRIFYING HOW EASILY A NICE MEMORY CAN TURN INTO AN INSTRUMENT OF TORMENT
I THOUGHT... DAMN, ROPES REALLY DO LOOK GOOD ON HER..
BECAUSE THEN I REMEMBERED WHAT HAPPENNED NEXT...
OH SONOFA BITCH! WHAT IF SHE CRAMPS UP AGAIN!?
SHE STARTED TO WORRY.
BUT AS TIME PASSED, SHE FOUND THINGS LESS AND LESS ENTERTAINING, AND THEN...

GROWING NCREASINGLY UNCOMFORTABLE WIHT BOTH HER BINDINGS AND MY ABSENCE, HER MIND STARTED THINKING UP WORST CASE SCENARIOS. WHAT IF SOMETH NG WENT TERR.BLY WRONG
WHAT IF SOMETHING HAPPENNED TO ME
SHE DOJBLED HER EFFORTS IN TRYING TO WRIGGLE OUT OF HER BINDINGS BUT TO NO AVAIL
HNNNNGH!!!
IT SETTLED IN FOR BOTH OF US IN FACT.
PREVIOUSLY SOOTHING TUNE OF AMERICAN PIE BECAME A GRATING NAIL ON THE CHALKBOARD AS ITS VERY PRESENCE MOCKED ME.
SHE WAS STUCK, AND ALONE AND I COULDN'T DO ANYHT NG ABOUT IT

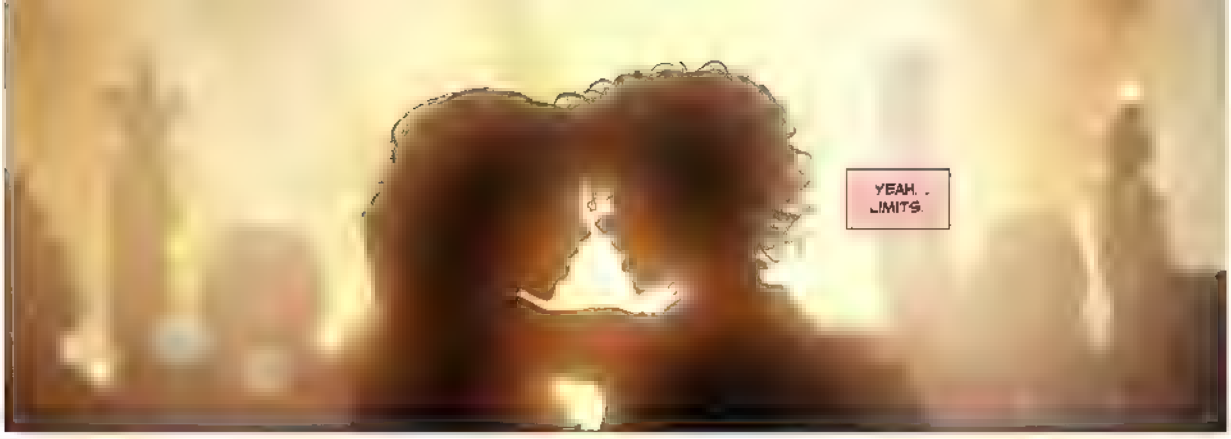
SHE WAS STUCK!
HMFF
HMMF
SHE WAS ALONE...
AND THEN... PANIC SETTLED IN
WELL... I COULDN'T DO ANYTHING SANE.
LISTEN, IT MADE SENSE TO ME AT THE TIME. SURE IT WAS ALL KINDS OF RISKY, BUT IF I COULD GET HIM AWAY FROM THE ATTIC, CAUSE A COMMOTION, I'D SNEAK UP THERE AND GET HER FREE
I MEAN, WHEN ALL REASONABLE OPTIONS ARE OFF THE TABLE, YOU HAVE TO RESORT TO THE UNREASONABLE ONES

AND I ALMOST DID.
BUT I WAS SAVED BY THE BELL
BELL-LEEP
YEAH--- I'M DONE UP HERE. OH YOU'RE AT THE PARKING LOT ALREADY
SURE, I'M ON MY WAY
I FUCKING FLEW UP THOSE STAIRS,
I NEEDED TO KNOW THAT SHE WAS OKAY!
WHEN I OPENED THOSE DOORS THE FIRST THING I FELT WAS IMMENSE RELIEF..
OH, GOD, ALLY, I'M SO SORRY, THE---


THE SECOND THING I FELT.
WAS MY HEART BREAKING

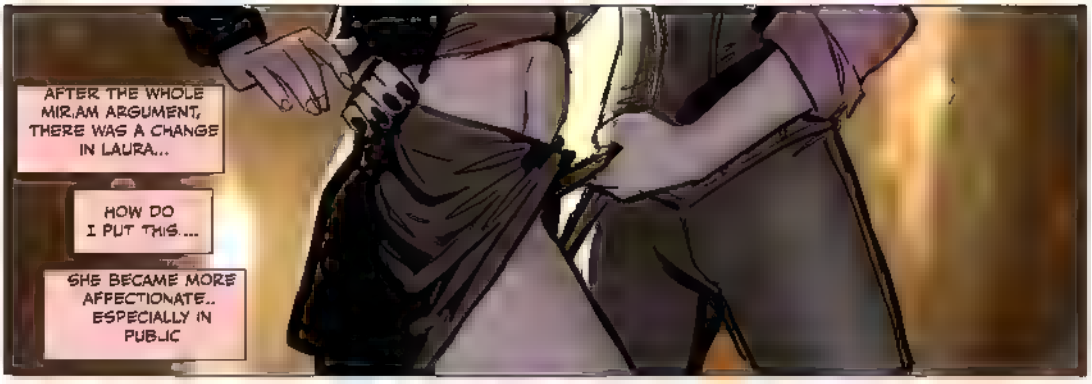
IT'S FUNNY... YOU'D THINK THAT WE'D GET OUT OF THAT ATTIC AS FAST AS WE COULD THAT DAY , BUT WE DIDN'T.
WE STAYED THERE FOR AT LEAST AN HOUR LONGER, FOR THE FIRST TIME EVER ENGAGING IN SOME HONEST TO GOD AFTERCARE
NO SESSION REVIEW, NO NITPICKS OR CRITIQUE, NO POINTERS, JUST WARMTH AND KINDNESS.

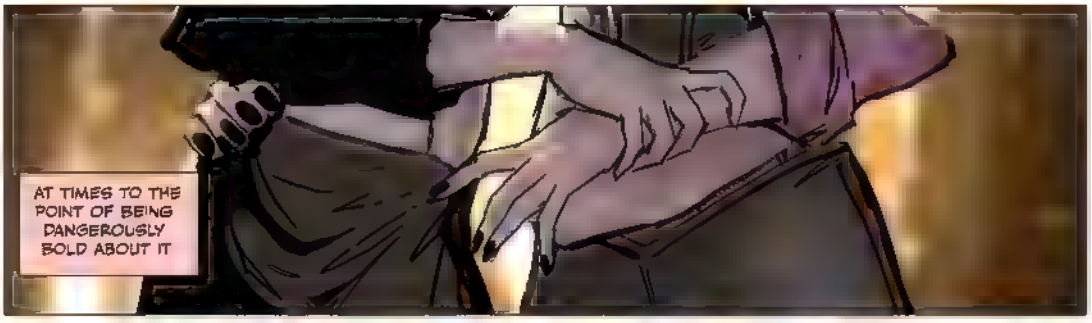
ALAN?
HM?
FROM NOW ON, WE REALLY GOTTA SET SOME LIMITS
I THOUGHT WE ALREADY DID THAT
HEH YEEEAH... THIS TIME WE GOTTA STICK TO THEM THO

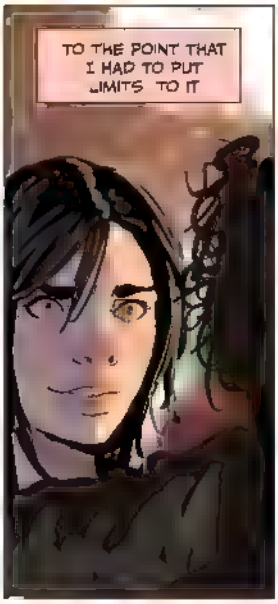

YEAH. . .IMITS.

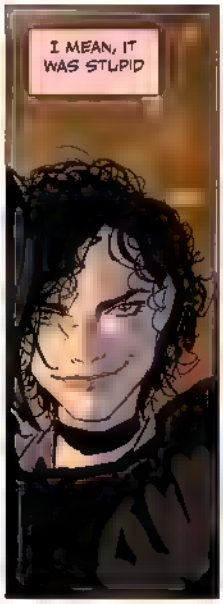
.IMITS ARE A BITCH!

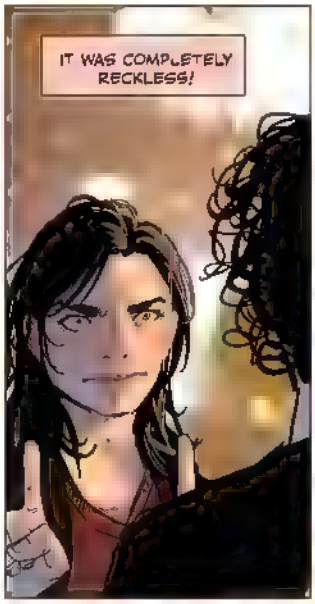
ESPECIALLY WHEN IT'S SETTING .IMITS ON SOMETHING YOU REA.LY, *REALLY* WANT.


AFTER THE WHOLE MIRIAM ARGUMENT, THERE WAS A CHANGE IN LAURA...
HOW DO I PUT THIS....
SHE BECAME MORE AFFECTIONATE.. ESPECIALLY IN PUBLIC


AT TIMES TO THE POINT OF BEING DANGEROUSLY BOLD ABOUT IT

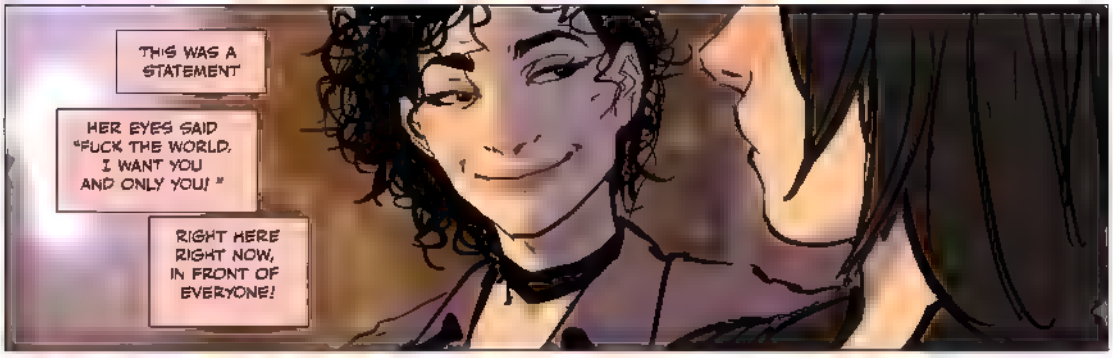

TO THE POINT THAT I HAD TO PUT LIMITS TO IT

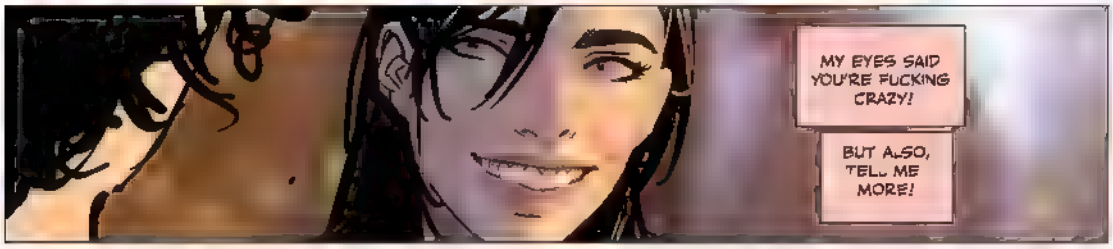

I MEAN, IT WAS STUPID

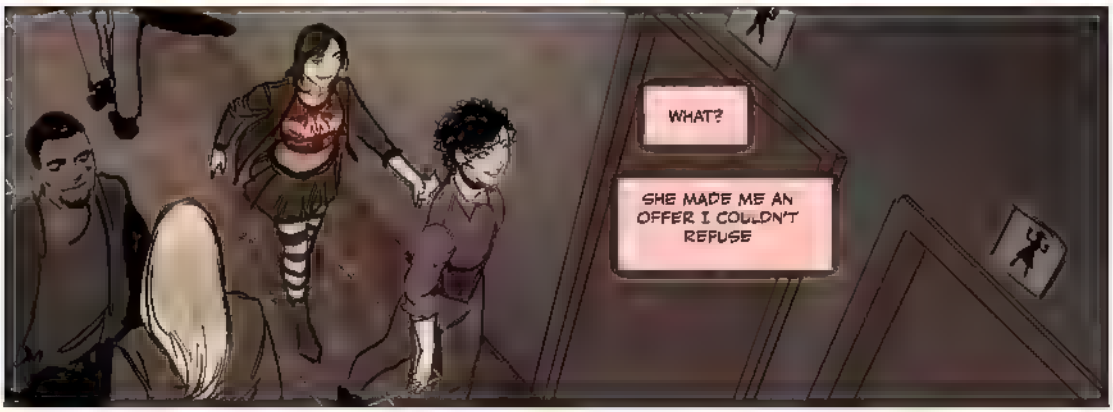

IT WAS COMPLETELY RECKLESS!

BEYOND INAPPROPROATE

BUT IT WAS ALSO SO INCREDIBLY FUCKING FLATTERING.


THIS WAS A STATEMENT
HER EYES SAID "FUCK THE WORLD, I WANT YOU AND ONLY YOU! "
RIGHT HERE RIGHT NOW, IN FRONT OF EVERYONE!


MY EYES SAID YOU'RE FUCKING CRAZY!
BUT ALSO, TELL ME MORE!

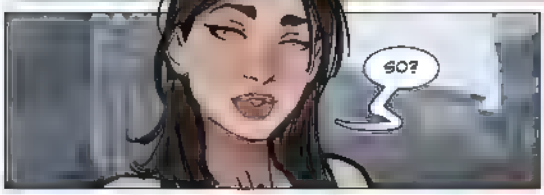

WHAT?
SHE MADE ME AN OFFER I COULDN'T REFUSE

OKAY I MEAN I COULD..
I JUST DIDN'T WANT TO.

HOWEVER I DEFINITELY MADE A MENTAL NOTE THAT WE'D HAVE TO TALK ABOUT SETTING LIMITS IN PUBLIC
BUT LIKE IN A FEW WEEKS.
I MEAN I HAD OTHER PRIORITIES AT THE TIME I HAD EXAMS, AND THE WORKLOAD AT THE TATTOO SHOP WAS NO LAUGHING MATTER. .
AND AFTER ALL THERE WAS NOTHING WRONG WITH FLAUNTING YOUR LOVE EVERY NOW AND THEN. .
...

AND BY EVERY NOW AND THEN I MEAN RELENTLESSLY AND ALWAYS
AT WORK..
AT WORK BREAKS...
AT COLLEGE
DURING THE RARE NIGHTS I'D SPEND AT HOME WITH MY DAD. .
LIKE I SAID, LOVING SOMEONE MEANS BUILDING A SHRINE DEVOTED TO THEM IN YOUR HEART...
AND THE FIRES IN OUR SHRINE BURNED BRIGHTER THAN EVER
BUT FEED ANY FIRE WELL ENOUGH AND IT HAS WAYS OF RUNNING WILD. .

ALL IT TAKES IS A FEW ROGUE SPARKS...
FUCK, WE GOTTA FO BACK WE FORGOT YOUR SCARF.


SO?

SHE'LL SEE YOUR UH... MY MARKS

F I WANTED TO HIDE THEM I'D WEAR MY TURTLENECK.
NOW COME ON!

TIME FOR YOU TO MEET MY BEST FRIEND!

HOLY CRAP SHE LIVES!!!

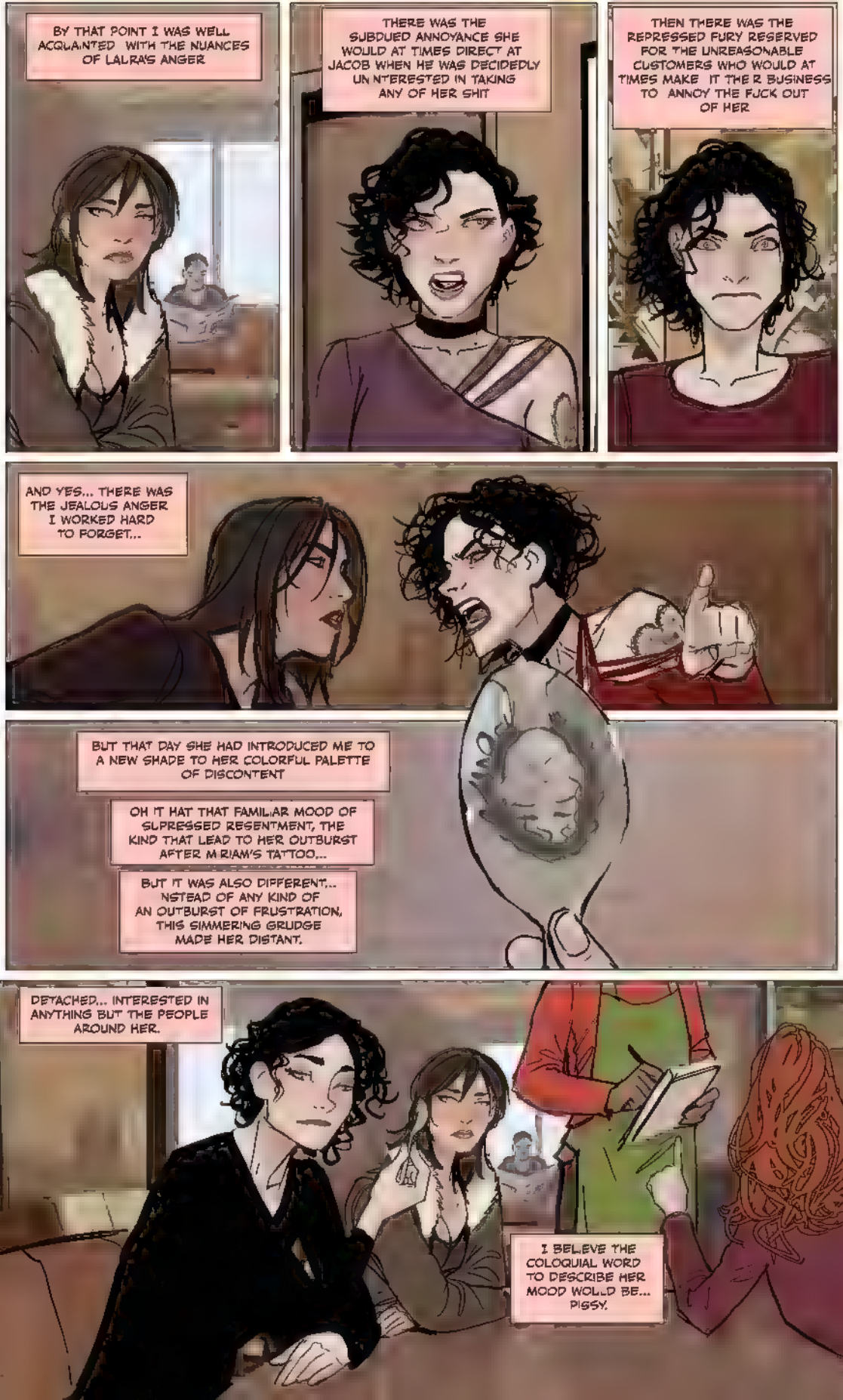
THERE'S MY FAVORITE GINGER!

THERE'S MY FAVORITE SELF- LOATHING BLONDE!
OH YOU BITCH!
NO, YOU BITCH!

WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN? IT'S BEEN FUCKING MONTHS!
EXAMS! MOVING! A WHOLE LOT OF SHIT!
COUGH

OH YEAH, LAURA, MEET CASSIE MY BEST FRIEND!

AND THE FIRST WOMAN THIS ONE SAW NAKED!
CASSIE WHAT THE FUCK!?
SIGH. . WITH THE BENEFIT OF HINDSIGHT AND KNOWING THINGS ABOUT LAURA NOW THAT I DIDN'T KNOW THEN...
THIS WAS A TERRIBLE JOKE TO START TH NGS OFF WITH!

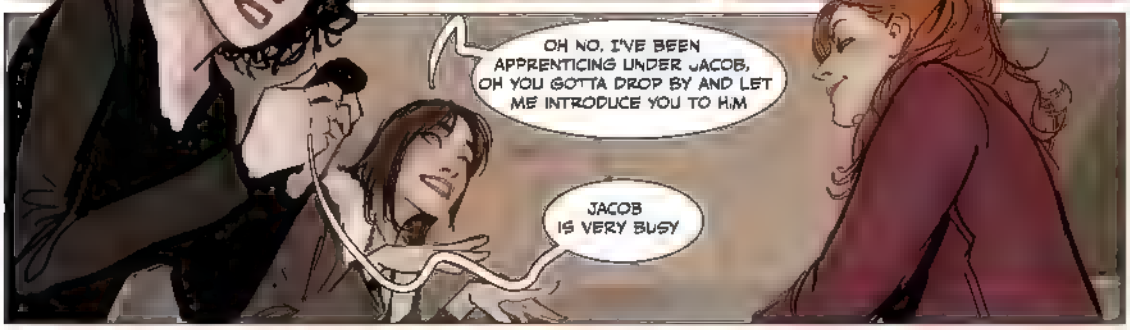

BY THAT POINT I WAS WELL ACQUAINTED WITH THE NUANCES OF LAURA'S ANGER
THERE WAS THE SUBDUED ANNOYANCE SHE WOULD AT TIMES DIRECT AT JACOB WHEN HE WAS DECIDEDLY UN NTERESTED IN TAKING ANY OF HER SHIT
THEN THERE WAS THE REPRESSED FURY RESERVED FOR THE UNREASONABLE CUSTOMERS WHO WOULD AT TIMES MAKE IT THE R BUSINESS TO ANNOY THE FUCK OUT OF HER
AND YES... THERE WAS THE JEALOUS ANGER I WORKED HARD TO FORGET...
BUT THAT DAY SHE HAD INTRODUCED ME TO A NEW SHADE TO HER COLORFUL PALETTE OF DISCONTENT
OH IT HAT THAT FAMILIAR MOOD OF SUPRESSED RESENTMENT, THE KIND THAT LEAD TO HER OUTBURST AFTER M RIAM'S TATTOO...
BUT IT WAS ALSO DIFFERENT... NSTEAD OF ANY KIND OF AN OUTBURST OF FRUSTRATION, THIS SIMMERING GRUDGE MADE HER DISTANT.
DETACHED... INTERESTED IN ANYTHING BUT THE PEOPLE AROUND HER.
I BELIEVE THE COLOQUIAL WORD TO DESCRIBE HER MOOD WOULD BE... PISSY.

SO WHAT'S NEW WITH... WELL, THE BOTH OF YOU?
HOW'S TATTOING LIFE?

PRETTY GOOD. I MAY ACTLALLY GET A FULL TIME JOB AT THE STUDIO EVEN.

RIGHT?
MMHM

I THOUGHT YOU WERE ALREADY WORKING THERE FULL TIME


OH NO, I'VE BEEN APPRENTICING UNDER JACOB, OH YOU GOTTA DROP BY AND LET ME INTRODUCE YOU TO HIM
JACOB IS VERY BUSY

YEAH, I KNOW I DON'T MEAN SPEND THE DAY, I JUST WANT TO INTRODUCE HER

MMH,

SO LAURA, YOU'RE A MANAGER THERE?

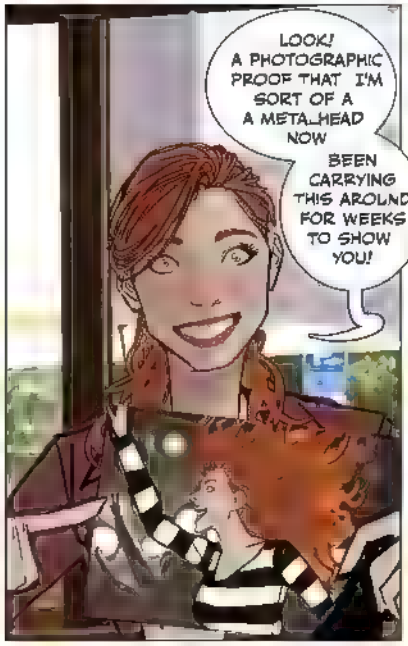
UHUH.

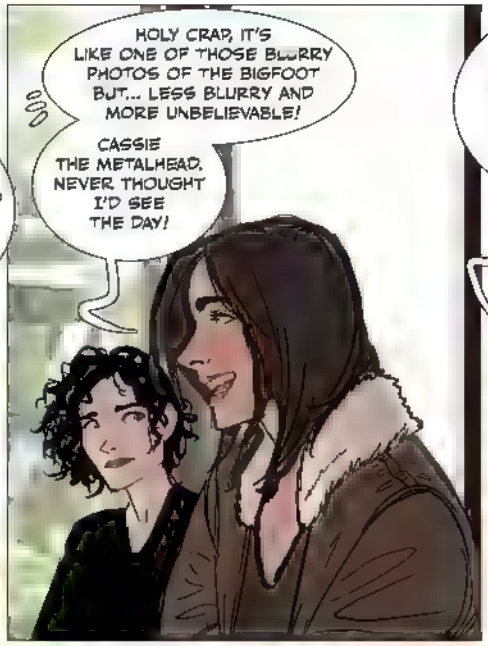
R-RIGHT

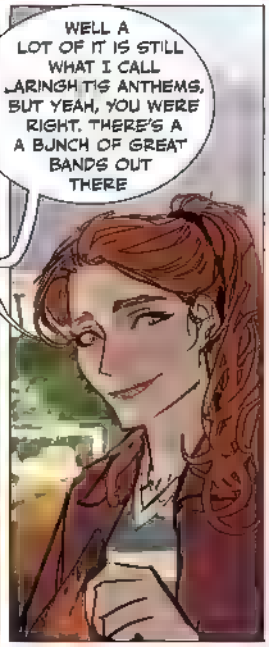
STOMP

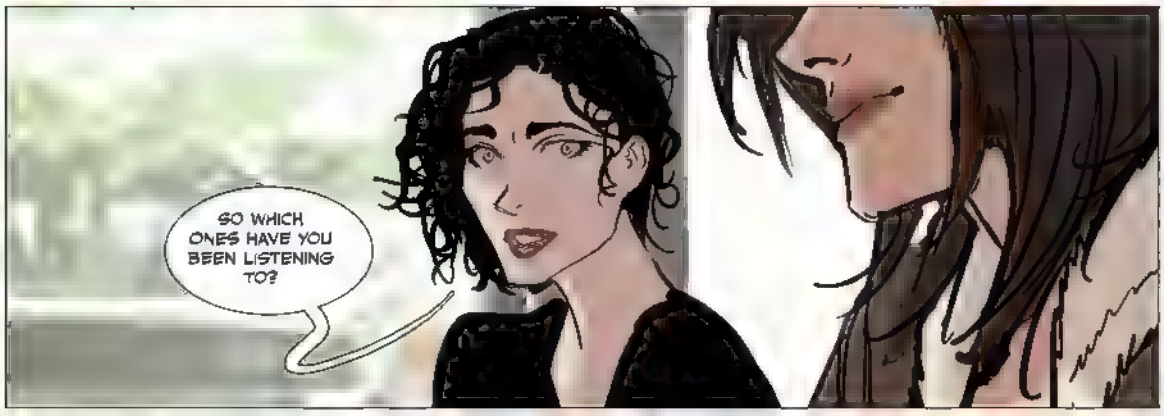
SO WHAT'S NEW WITH YOU?

WHAT?
GET OFF THE FUCKING PHONE!
OOH THAT'S RIGHT YOU HAVEN'T SEEN IT YET!


LOOK! A PHOTOGRAPHIC PROOF THAT I'M SORT OF A A META_HEAD NOW
BEEN CARRYING THIS AROUND FOR WEEKS TO SHOW YOU!


HOLY CRAP, IT'S LIKE ONE OF THOSE BLURRY PHOTOS OF THE BIGFOOT BUT... LESS BLURRY AND MORE UNBELIEVABLE!
CASSIE THE METALHEAD. NEVER THOUGHT I'D SEE THE DAY!


WELL A LOT OF IT IS STILL WHAT I CALL LARINGHTIG ANTHEMS, BUT YEAH, YOU WERE RIGHT. THERE'S A A BUNCH OF GREAT BANDS OUT THERE

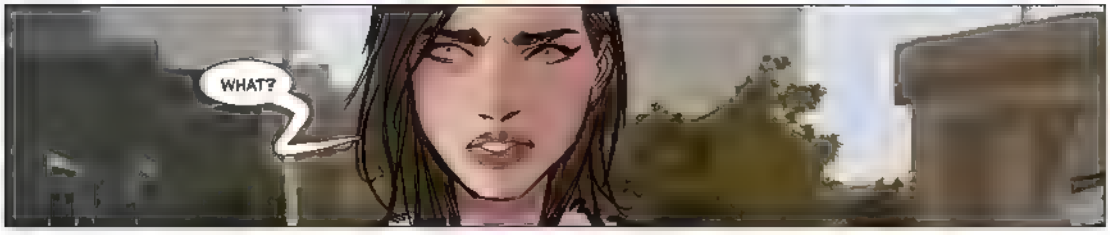

SO WHICH ONES HAVE YOU BEEN LISTENING TO?

OH, UM, WELL SINCE I WAS ALWAYS BIG ON MUSICAL THEATRE, MY BOYFRIEND TOM ACTUALLY STARTED ME OFF WITH SOME SYMPHONIC METAL BANDS.
NIGHTWISH?
AMONG OTHERS, YES. THERE'S WITHIN TEMPTATION...
YOU SHOULD GIVE EPICA A TRY
I DID, THEY ARE A BIT... TOO INTENSE FOR ME TOM SWEARS BY THEM THO.
TOM HAS A GOOD TASTE!
SO WHAT ABOUT YOU YOU STILL INTO THAT BAND, MIRIEL?
MIRIAM. OH YEAH, BIGTIME!
IN FACT, CHECK THIS!

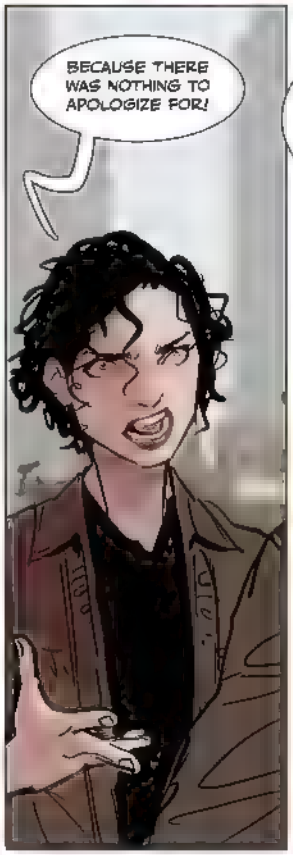
OH MY GOD, ANNE!!! WHAT THE FUCK?
HEHEH, IT'S A BIT LARGE BUT. .
NO NOT THE TATTOO, WHAT'S WITH THE BRUISES?
OH EHEH, YEAH UM... WE GET PASSIONATE.
PASSIONATE LIKE THE FUCKING DRACULA, DAMN!
IT'S CALLED A HICKEY. DON'T WORRY ONE DAY YOU MAY GET ONE TOO.
I'VE HAD HICKEYS BUT NOT LIKE A DOZEN OF THEM AT THE SAME TIME. WHAT ARE YOU TRYING TO SIGN YOUR NAME ON HER, JEEZ.
OKAY, REEL IT IN, CASSIE
NOT COOL!

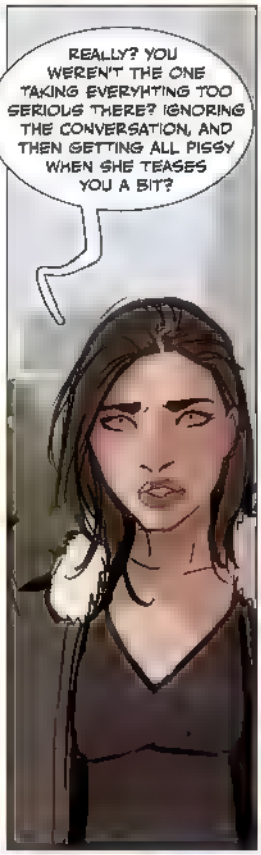
YEAH, I THINK I LOST MY APPETITE. I'M LEAVING.
LAURA...
YOU COMING?
I--
OH, GOD, ANNE, I SWEAR I DIDN'TMEAN ANYTHING BY IT I WAS JUST SURPRISED AND...
NO IT'S... IT'S FINE
SHE'S NOT USUALLY LIKE THIS, IT'S JUST BEEN A ROUGH WEEK...
FINE. STAY THEN. I'M GOING TO WORK.
LAURA WAIT!

HEY! WILL YOU STOP FOR CRYING OUT LOUD!
LAURA WHAT THE FUCK WAS THAT?
YOU TELL ME WHAT THE FUCK WAS THAT?
WHAT?
I'M THE FIRST WOMAN SHE SAW NAKED,
THAT WAS A JOKE
MOCKING ME FOR THE HICKEYS
SHE WAS JUST
AND YOU!
ME-ME WHAT?
YOU APOLOGIZING FOR ME!?


WHAT?

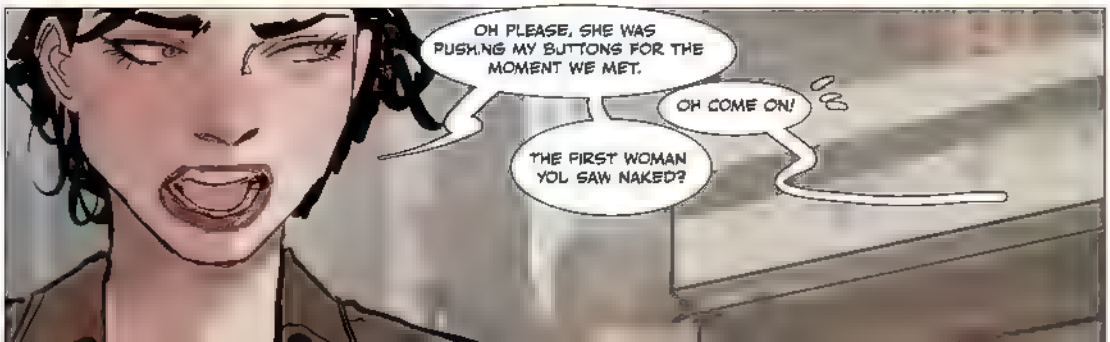
YOU APOLOGIZED FOR ME.
I APOLOGIZED BECAUSE YOU DIDN'T


BECAUSE THERE WAS NOTHING TO APOLOGIZE FOR!


REALLY? YOU WEREN'T THE ONE TAKING EVERYHTING TOO SERIOUS THERE? IGNORING THE CONVERSATION, AND THEN GETTING ALL PISSY WHEN SHE TEASES YOU A BIT?

THAT'S TEASING ME A BIT?

HOLY SHIT, LAURA YOU SPENT MONTHS TEASING ME ABOUT BEING 19 AND NOT BEING ABLE TO BUY YOU DRINKS AND I LET IT SLIDE, SHE CALLS YOU DRACULA ONCE AND IT'S THE END OF THE FUCKING WORLD OVER HERE


OH PLEASE, SHE WAS PUSHING MY BUTTONS FOR THE MOMENT WE MET.
OH COME ON!
THE FIRST WOMAN YOU SAW NAKED?

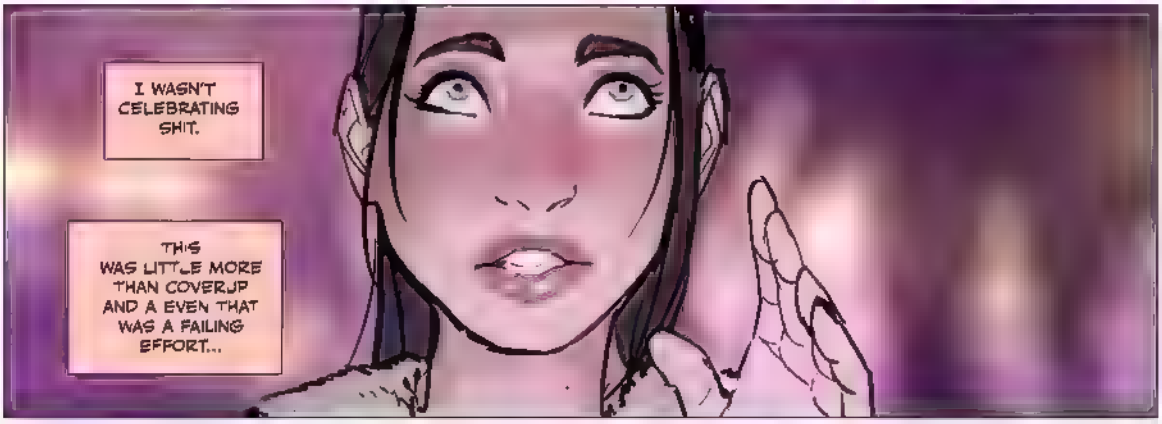
OH MY GOD, SHE MOONLIGHT'S AS AN ART MODEL AT MY COLLEGE CLASSES, AND EVEN THAT WAS A DUMB JOKE AS I'VE DRAWN OTHERS BEFORE HER!
FINE. THAT WAS A JOKE. YOU KNOW WHAT WASN'T A JOKE? HER TONE OF VOICE WHEN SHE STARTED GIVING ME SHIT FOR THE HICKEYS
HICKEYS THAT MIND YOU I SUGGESTED YOU KEEP HIDDEN
OKAY, I AM SORRY ABOUT THAT
BUT I DID TELL HER TO STOP. SHE WAS JUST SURPRISED.
I MEAN EVEN JACOB WAS SURPRISED WHEN HE SAW THEM FIRST
YEAH. . BUT WHEN JACOB WAS SURPRISED YOU DIDN'T APOLOGIZE FOR ME.
BECAUSE YOU WEREN'T ACTING LIKE A PISSY TEENAGER.
MMM
YEAH I'VE HEARD THIS OH, IT'S JUST LAURA HAVING ONEOF HER MOODS. SHE'S ON HER PERIOD SHE'S ACTING LIKE A FUCKING TEENAGER. .
MY PARENTS DID THAT TO ME...
SO DID MY EX.
I WAS NEVER GOOD ENOUGH FOR THEM SO THEY KEPT APOLOGIZING FOR ME ..
NEVER EXPECTED FOR YOU TO DO THE SAME.

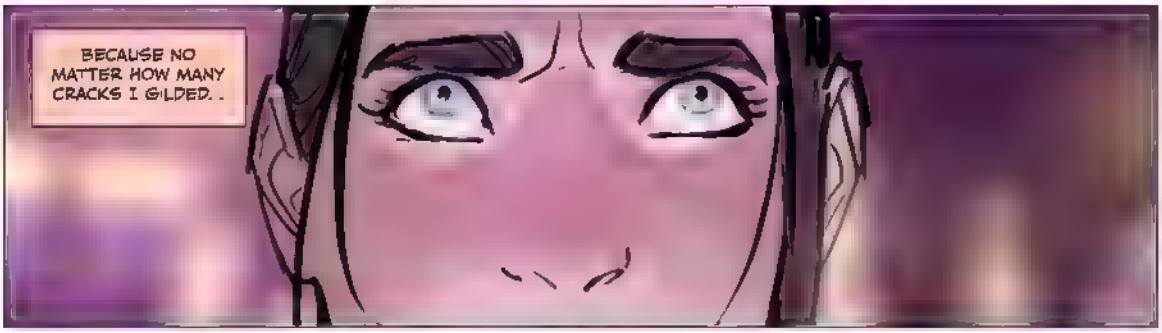
THERE WAS A PAUSE PREGNANT WITH EXPECTATION...
SHE EXPECTED ME TO APOLOGIZE...
BUT I JJST FOUND THIS WHOLE TH NG SO COLOSSALY STUPID...
THAT'S SO NOT FUCKING FAIR, LAURA!
YEAH.. IT'S NOT.
LAURA!

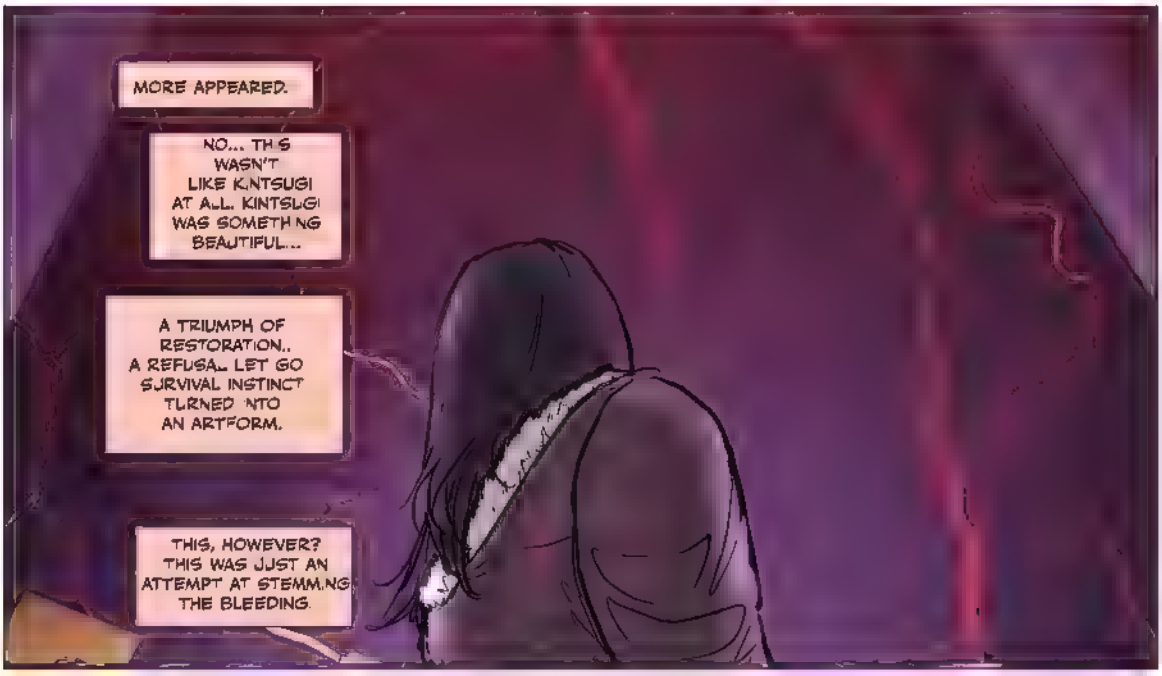
FUCK!
SOONER OR LATER EVERY LOVESTRUCK SWEETHEART LEARNS THE CRUEL TRUTH. THERE ARE NO PERFECT RELATIONSHIPS.
NOT A SINGLE SHRINE OF THE HEART IS WITHOUT ITS WEAR AND TEAR
AND AFTER A YEAR AND A FEW MONTHS OF LOVING HER, MY OWN SHRINE HAS HAD ITS FAIR SHARE OF THEM...
THE SMALL CRACKS.

MOMENTS OF INSECURITY
OF SAYING THE WRONG THING AND ACTING LIKE IT'S ALL FINE
BUT LOVE MEANS LETTING SOME THINGS SLIDE. IT MEANS MAINTAINING THE SHRINE...
THE WHOLE THING SORT OF REMINDS ME OF KINTSUGI, A JAPANESE ART OF RESTORING BROKEN POTTERY BY GILDING THE BREAKING POINTS.
AND I SUPPOSE IN MY HEART'S HIDDEN PRECIOUS SHRINE I WAS DOING JUST THAT
COVERING THE CRACKS IN THE WALLS WITH GOOD MEMORIES
GILDING THE HURTFUL MOMENTS WITH CHERISHED ONES...

PROBLEM WAS... IN KINTSUGI, THE IDEA WAS THAT GILDING CELEBRATES THE HISTORY OF THE RESTORED THING.


I WASN'T CELEBRATING SHIT.
THIS WAS LITTLE MORE THAN COVERUP AND A EVEN THAT WAS A FAILING EFFORT...


BECAUSE NO MATTER HOW MANY CRACKS I GILDED. .


MORE APPEARED.
NO... THIS WASN'T LIKE KINTSUGI AT ALL. KINTSUGI WAS SOMETHING BEAUTIFUL...
A TRIUMPH OF RESTORATION.. A REFUSAL LET GO SURVIVAL INSTINCT TURNED INTO AN ARTFORM.
THIS, HOWEVER? THIS WAS JUST AN ATTEMPT AT STEMMING THE BLEEDING.

EACH NICE MEMORY WAS LIKE A BANDAID ON A SPREADING WOUND
AND I WAS RUNNING OUT OF BANDAIDS.
OF GOOD MEMORIES...
AND THE FUCKED UP PART WAS... IT TOOK ME BY SURPRISE, BECAUSE FOR THE LIFE OF ME I COULDN'T FIGURE OUT...
WHEN THE FUCK DID IT GET THIS BAD?

I WOULD END UP NOT SEEING LAURA FOR FIVE DAYS AFTER THAT. MY MESSAGES UNANSWERED. MY CALLS GHOSTED. WITH EACH PASSING DAY I GREW MORE AND MORE ANXIOUS.

I WAS NEVER IN A SERIOUS RELATIONSHIP BEFORE HER. I HAD NO FRAME OF REFERENCE ON HOW TO DEAL WITH A SITUATION LIKE THAT. SO FOR FIVE DAYS I WAS JUMPY. EVERY RING OF THE PHONE WAS LIKE AN ELECTRIC JOLT FOLLOWED BY A WAVE OF DISSAPOINTMENT WHEN IT WASN'T HER

AND I'M NOT GONNA LIE. A FEW DAYS IN MY ANXIETY AND CONFUSION TURNED TO FRUSTRATION AND ANNOYANCE. IT FELT LIKE SUCH A POINTLESS ARGUMENT. I JUST DIDN'T GET IT

GIRLFRIEND PROBLEMS?

THAT OBVIOUS?

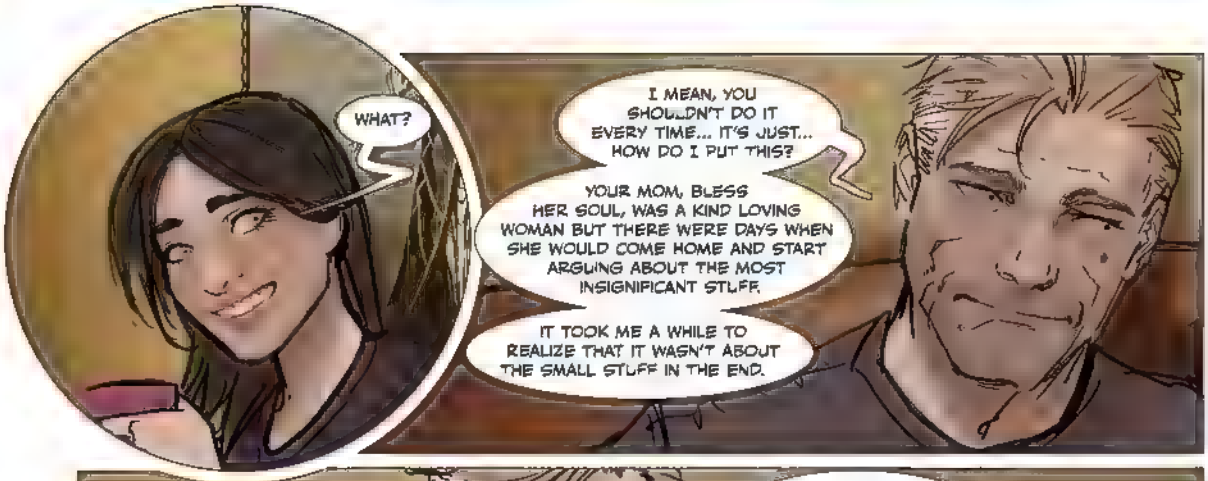
WELL, IT'S BEEN MONTHS SINCE THE LAST TIME YOU SPENT FIVE NIGHTS IN A ROW SLEEPING HERE.

DON'T GET ME WRONG I LOVE THAT YOU ARE AROUND MORE BUT BETWEEN THAT AND THE MOOD I DON'T NEED TO BE A DETECTIVE TO PUT TWO AND TWO TOGETHER.

LAURA AND I... WE HAD A BIG FIGHT... A STUPID FIGHT AND... DAD I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO.

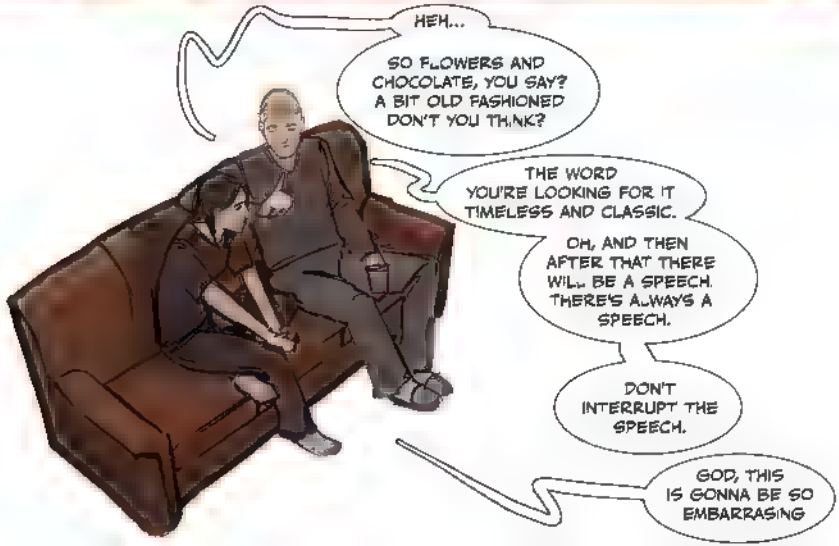
THING IS... IT WASN'T MY FAULT BUT I THINK SHE WANTS ME TO APOLOGIZE!

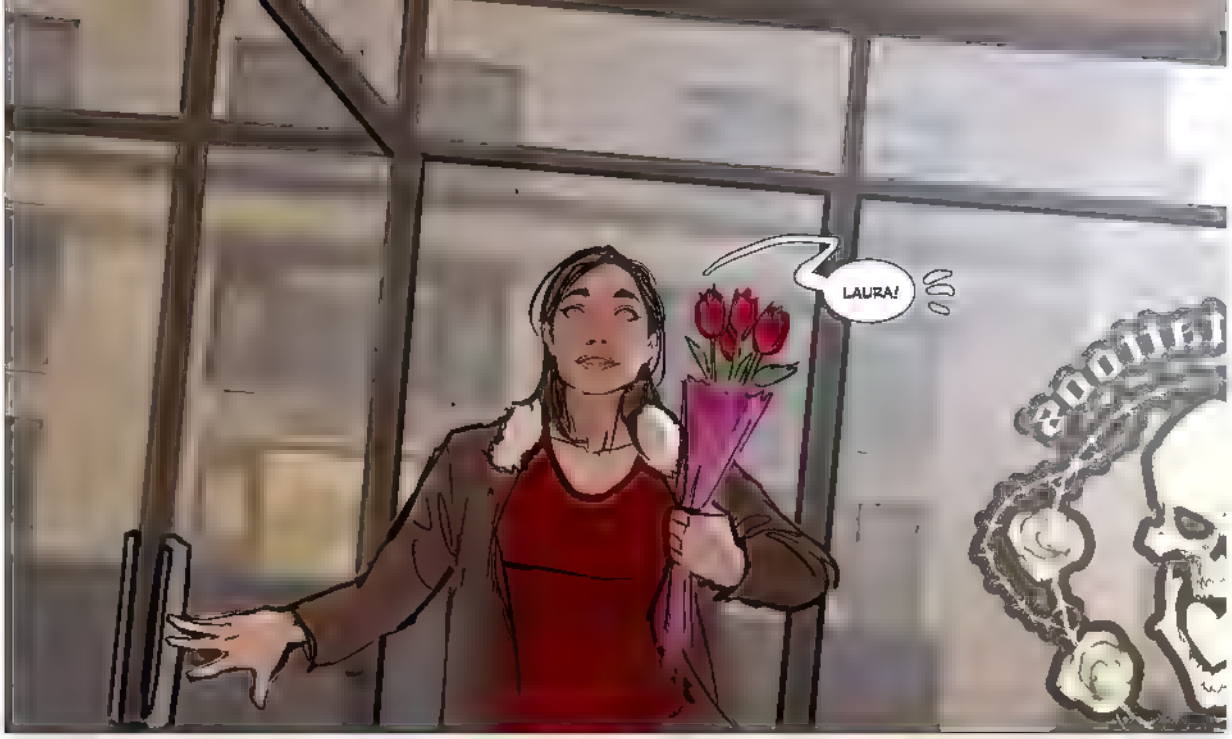
THEN TELL HER YOU'RE SORRY AND BRING FLOWERS, AND MAYBE CHOCOLATE

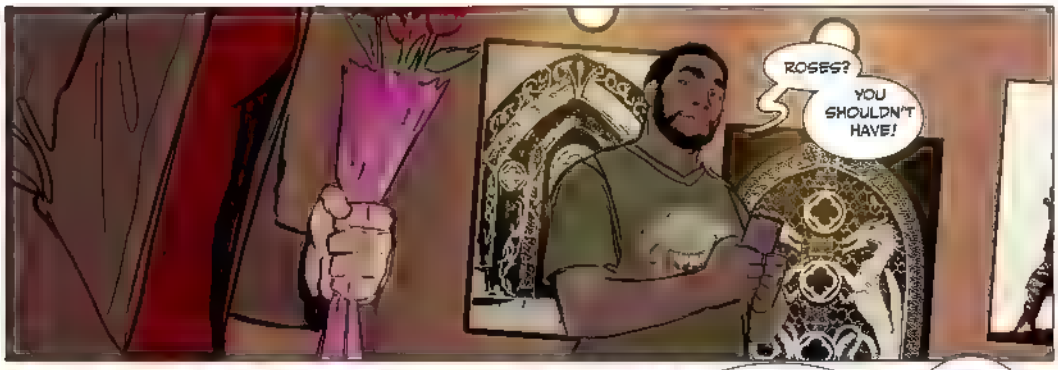

WHAT?
I MEAN, YOU SHOULDN'T DO IT EVERY TIME... IT'S JUST... HOW DO I PUT THIS?
YOUR MOM, BLESS HER SOUL, WAS A KIND LOVING WOMAN BUT THERE WERE DAYS WHEN SHE WOULD COME HOME AND START ARGUING ABOUT THE MOST INSIGNIFICANT STUFF.
IT TOOK ME A WHILE TO REALIZE THAT IT WASN'T ABOUT THE SMALL STUFF IN THE END.

IT WAS HER JOB. HER HEALTH PROBLEMS... HER WORRIES THAT FOLLOWED HER HOME.
AND HERE SHE WOULD TAKE ALL HER ANGER AT THE WORLD AND FOCUS IT ON A PIECE OF MUD ON MY SHOE, OR A PIECE OF LAUNDRY OUT OF THE BASKET..
AND I WOULD APOLOGIZE. BECAUSE SOMETIMES THEY JUST NEED SOMEONE TO APOLOGIZE

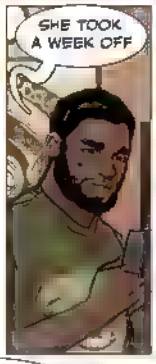
I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOUR PROBLEM WITH LAURA IS BUT WHAT I'M TRYING O SAY IS...RELATIONSHIPS ARE... NEVER IDEAL. THERE ARE ALWAYS COMPROMISES TO BE MADE
AND SOMETIMES THAT MEANS THAT EVERY NOW AND THEN YOU SET YOUR PRIDE ASIDE BECAUSE YOU LOVE THEM
EVEN WHEN THEY'RE DRIVING YOU NUTS.

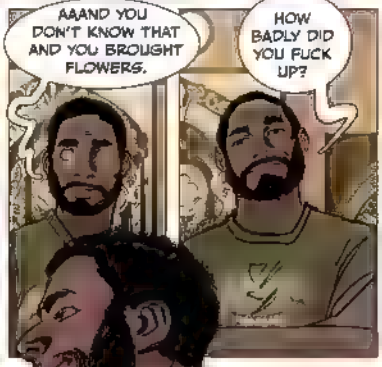

HEH...
SO FLOWERS AND CHOCOLATE, YOU SAY? A BIT OLD FASHIONED DON'T YOU THINK?
THE WORD YOU'RE LOOKING FOR IT TIMELESS AND CLASSIC.
OH, AND THEN AFTER THAT THERE WILL BE A SPEECH. THERE'S ALWAYS A SPEECH.
DON'T INTERRUPT THE SPEECH.
GOD, THIS IS GONNA BE SO EMBARRASING

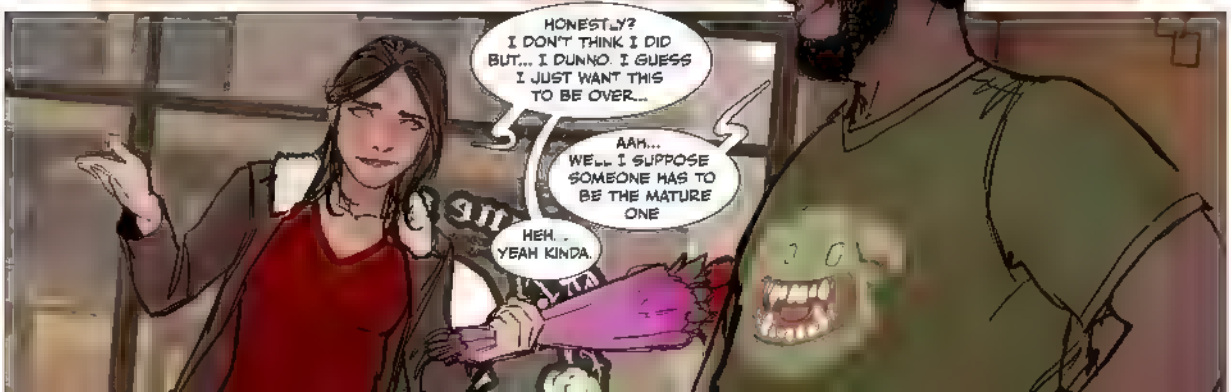

LAURA!
BOOM!


ROSES?
YOU SHOULDN'T HAVE!

FUNNY!
WHERE'S LAURA?


SHE TOOK A WEEK OFF


AAAND YOU DON'T KNOW THAT AND YOU BROUGHT FLOWERS.
HOW BADLY DID YOU FUCK UP?


HONESTLY? I DON'T THINK I DID BUT... I DUNNO. I GUESS I JUST WANT THIS TO BE OVER...
AAH... WELL I SUPPOSE SOMEONE HAS TO BE THE MATURE ONE
HEH... YEAH KINDA.

BUT YKNOW... DON'T TELL HER I SAID THAT!
NO WORRIES I GOT BETTER THINGS TO DO WITH MY TIME THAN GETING LAURA ALL RILED UP
IN FACT, WHEN YOU TWO PATCH IT UP...
IF.. WE PATCH IT UP
THAT BAD?
I DIDN'T EVEN KNOW THAT SHE WAS AWAY FROM HERE THESE LAST FIVE DAYS.
EEESH
ORNAMENTS AND STRINGS 4
WELL THEN, IF YOU PATCH IT UP, CAN YOU TELL LAURA THAT ANDERSON IS COMING BACK TOMORROW AND HE'S BRINGING IN ANOTHER ARTIST SO SHE'LL HAVE TO SET THINGS UP FOR HIM.
SURE!
ALSO IF YOU WANT TO OFFICIALLY WORK HERE YOU MAY WANT TO BE AROUND TOMORROW AS WELL. I'LL VOUCH FOR MY STAR APPRENTICE.

NOW, WHEN I CAME TO THE STORE... I HAD A BIT MORE CONFIDENCE ABOUT THIS WHOLE THING.

MAYBE IT'S CAUSE JACOB WAS PRETTY MUCH ALWAYS THERE, OFTEN THERE WERE CUSTOMERS

I DUNNO... I FIGURED I'D AVOID THE GRAND GESTURE OF SOME LOUD EXTENDED APOLOGY THAT WAY...

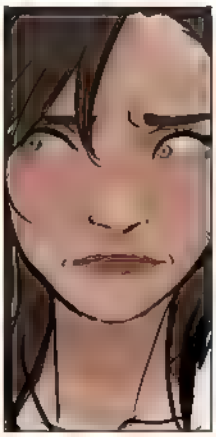
KINDA LIKE ONE OF THOSE MOVIE MOMENTS IN WHICH I GO: "I'M SO---"

BUT SHE SHUSHES ME. "IT'S OKAY" SHE SAYS.

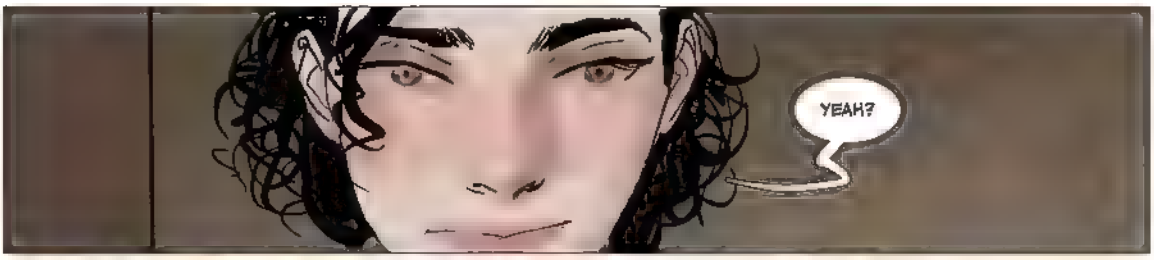
THERE'S A KISS...

AND ALL IS GOOD.

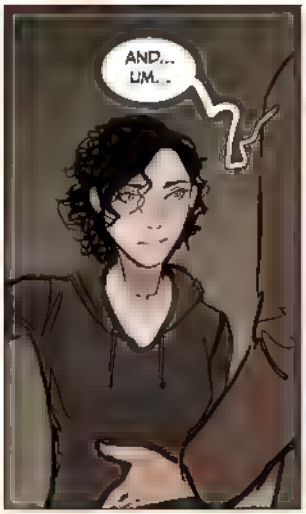
THERE, ALONE ON HER DOORSTEP HOWEVER, I FELT LIKE ONE OF THOSE DOOR TO DOOR SALESPEOPLE .



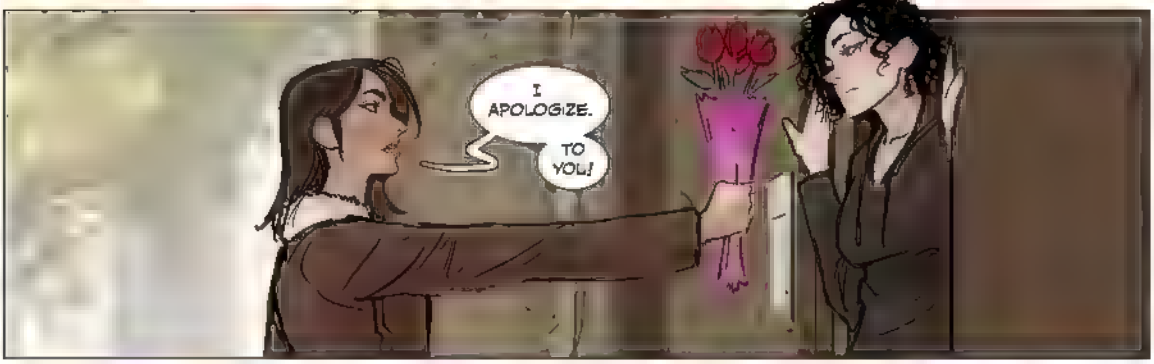
SO? WHAT'S IT?
I DROPPED BY TO UH... CHECK ON YOU.
JACOB SAID YOU TOOK SOME DAYS OFF


YEAH?

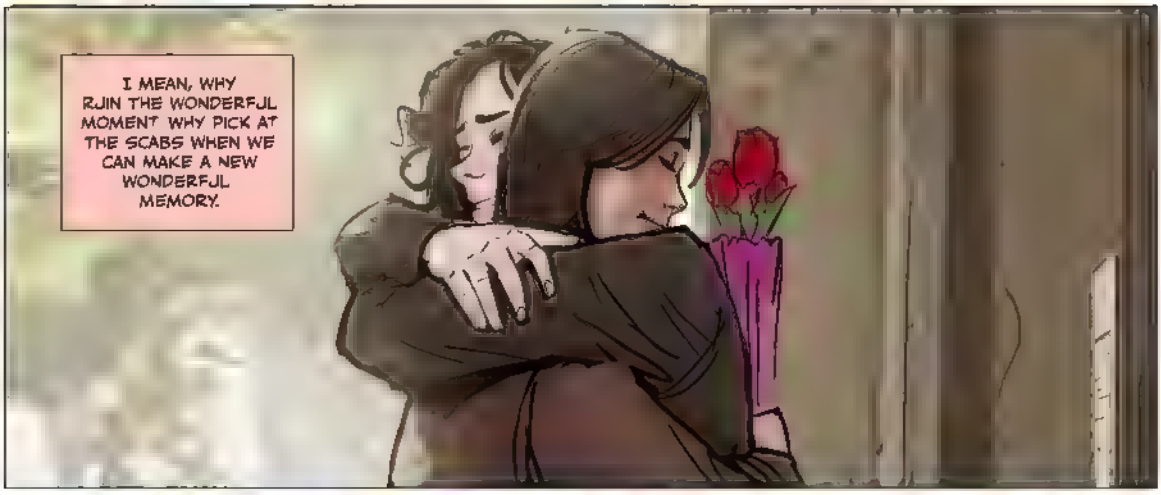
I UH... I THOUGHT YOU WERE MAYBE SICK AND SO... I CAME BY

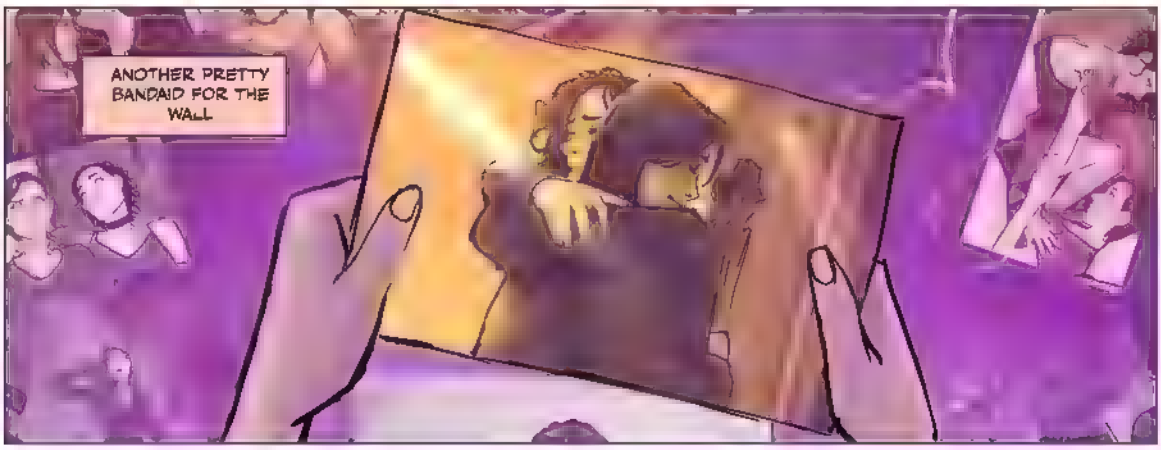

AND... UM...

I'M SORRY THAT I APOLOGIZED FOR YOU.
I... YEAH...

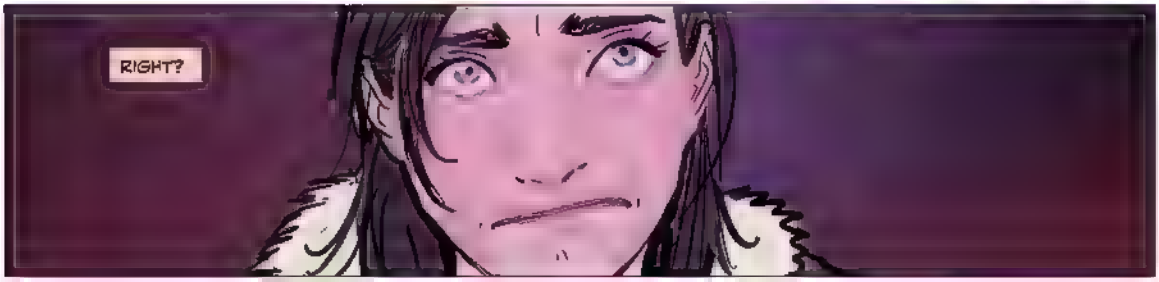

I APOLOGIZE.
TO YOU!

NOW . TURNS OUT, MY DAD WAS HALF RIGHT.
THERE WAS NO SPEECH.
JUST A HUG.
AND I WAS HAPPY ABOUT THAT...


I MEAN, WHY RUIN THE WONDERFUL MOMENT WHY PICK AT THE SCABS WHEN WE CAN MAKE A NEW WONDERFUL MEMORY.


ANOTHER PRETTY BANDAID FOR THE WALL

I MEAN WE WERE GOOD.


RIGHT?

IT'S FUNNY THINKING BACK ON THOSE DAYS. THE NAIVETY OF ME...
MY DAD HAD THE RIGHT IDEA. .
PROBLEM IS HE DIDN'T KNOW THE FULL STORY
IT'S TRUE THAT SOMETIMES YOU SET YOUR PRIDE ASIDE FOR THE ONES YOU LOVE
I MEAN, NO RELATIONSHIP SURVIVES WITHOUT SOME FLEX.BILITY.
YOU LET SOME STUFF SLIDE, YKNOW.
PROBLEM IS YOU LET TOO MANY THINGS SLIDE AND YOU LOSE THE VERY [redacted] UNDER YOU.
AND BEFORE YOU KNOW IT, YOU'RE FREE FALLING.

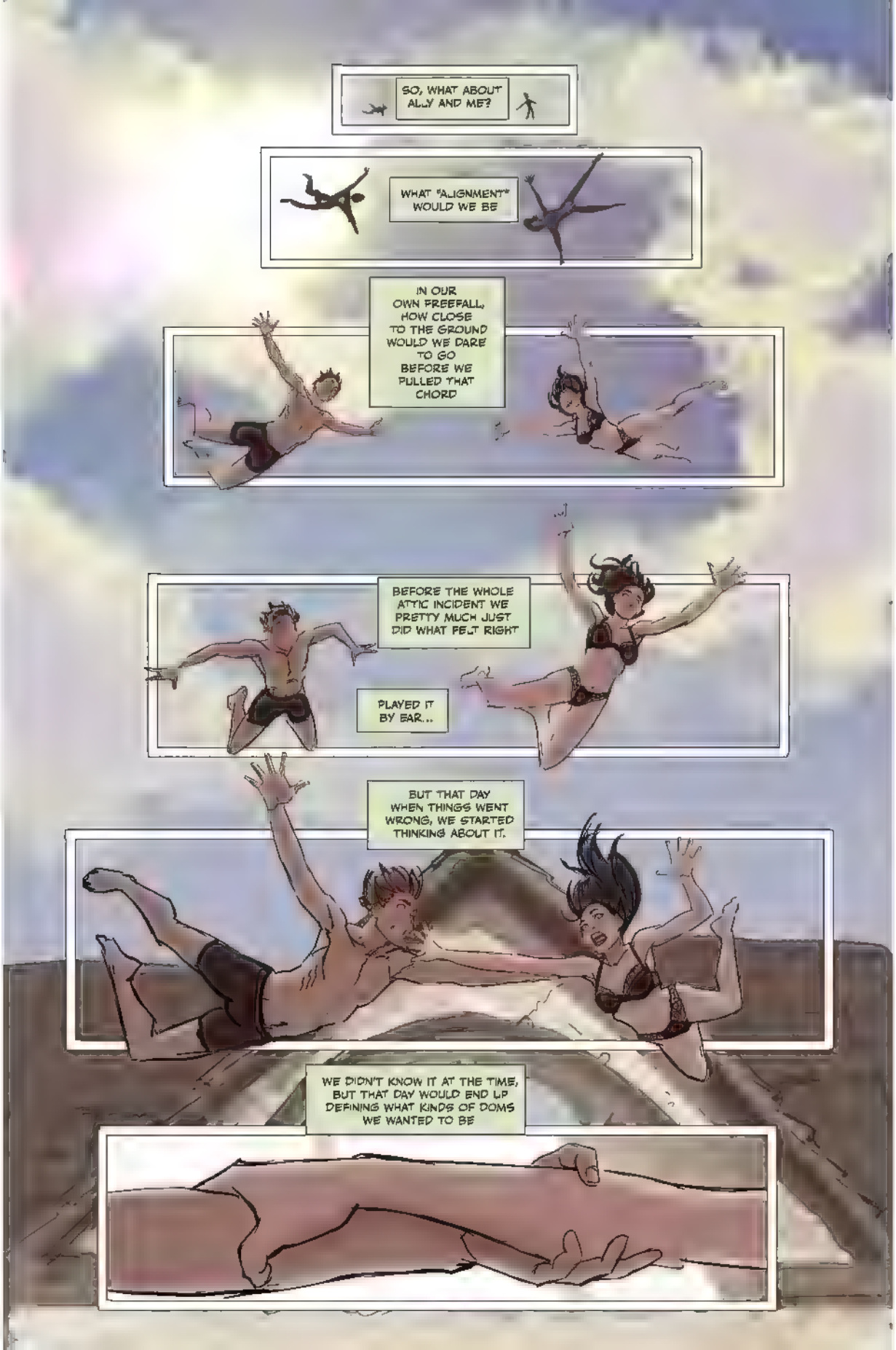
IT'S LIKE FREE FALLING.
YOU GET TO FEEL THE RUSH
THE ADRENALINE..
THE FEAR.
ALL WHILE KNOWING THAT SAFETY IS A CHORD PULL AWAY. THE QUESTION IS HOW CLOSE TO THE GROUND ARE YOU WILLING TO FALL BEFORE YOU DO IT.
HOW DANGEROUS YOU WANT T TO BE...
IT WAS SOMETHING THAT ASHE TOLD ME, AND WHILE I NEVER REALLY SAW EYE TO EYE WITH HER WHEN IT CAME TO THE INTENSITY OF THE GAME... I FELT THIS

SEE, ASHE WAS A STERN DOMME.
SHE LOVED THE SENSE OF CONTROL AND HAD NO PATIENCE FOR BRATTYNESS, BACKTALK OR SASS
ONE OF HER FAVORITE PUNISHMENTS WAS A FORM OF SOLITARY CONFINEMENT SHE'D BIND A SUBMISSIVE AND LEAVE THEM ALONE FOR A PERIOD OF TIME.
SHE CALLED IT THE TIME-OUT
AS YOU CAN IMAGINE THIS WAS ONE OF HER METHODS THAT ALLY AND I DISAPPROVED OF GREATLY DUE TO OUR OWN PERSONAL EXPER.ENCES...
BUT THAT'S THE THING. WE DIDN'T MATTER. OUR EXPERIENCES .. THEY DIDN'T MATTER
ASHE WAS CAREFUL IN HER SELECTION OF SUBMISSIVES. THEY HAD TO BE EXPERIENCED. SHE MADE HERSELF CLEAR N HER DEMANDS
SHE KNEW WHAT SHE WAS DOING.

AND TRUTH WAS, HER SUBMISSIVES WERE HAPPY.
TODAY I TAUGHT YOU A VALUABLE LIFE LESSON. NOW WHAT DO YOU SAY?
THEY WERE DOING DANGEROUS STUFF. TAKING RISKS... AND LOVING EVERY MINUTE OF IT
IT WAS THEIR GAME THEIR RULES THEIR RISKS
THANK YOU, MISTRESS.
GOOD BOY.
THEIR LIMITS.

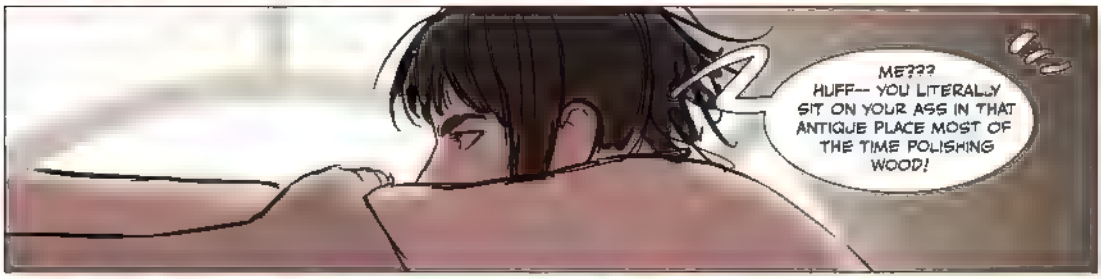
AND THAT WAS THE THING. THERE WERE MANY KINDS OF DOMS, MASTERS, SADISTS, DADDIES MOMM ES OR A MYR.AD OF DIFFERENT KINDS OF TOPS. BUT IN THE END THE MOST IMPORTANT DISTINCTION ABOUT THEM WAS HOW MUCH THEY WERE WILL.NG TO RISK FOR THEIR GAME'S IMMERSION.
HELL WE EVEN JSED ACRONYMS FOR THE DIFFERENT APPROACHES TO THE KINK.
ME PERSONALLY, I WAS PARTIAL TO THE S S.C AND R.A.C.K AS THEY DID A PRETTY GOOD JOB DIFERENTIATING THE... FUCK...ALIGNMENTS I GUESS.
WOW .. THIS SHIT REALLY IS A LARP... HEH
ANYHOW, S.S.C. STANDS FOR SAFE SANE AND CONSENSUAL, AND REPRESENTS A WAY OF ENGAGING THE KINK WITH ABSOLUTE PRIORITY BEING PLACED ON SAFETY, A CLEAR STATE OF MIND OF PEOPLE PARTICIPATING AND THEIR ABILITY AND WILLINGNESS TO CONSENT

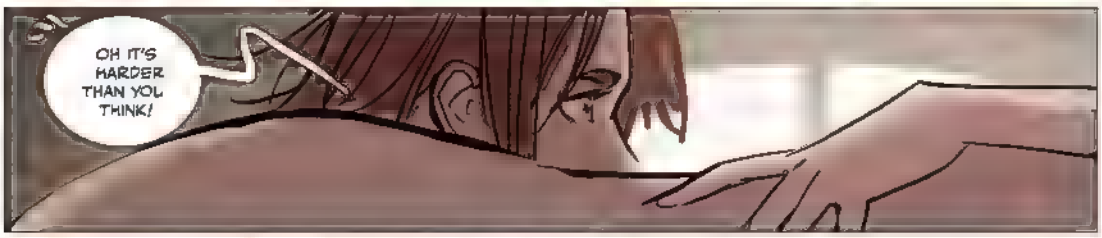
R.A.C.K. HOWEVER, OR RISK AWARE CONSENSUAL KINK, IS BASED AROUND THE IDEA THAT BDSM IS INHERENTLY RISKY, BUT AS LONG AS THE PARTICIPANTS ARE AWARE OF THAT CONSENT TO THAT, AND WILLINGLY SHARE IN ON THAT RISK, THE GAME IS ON.

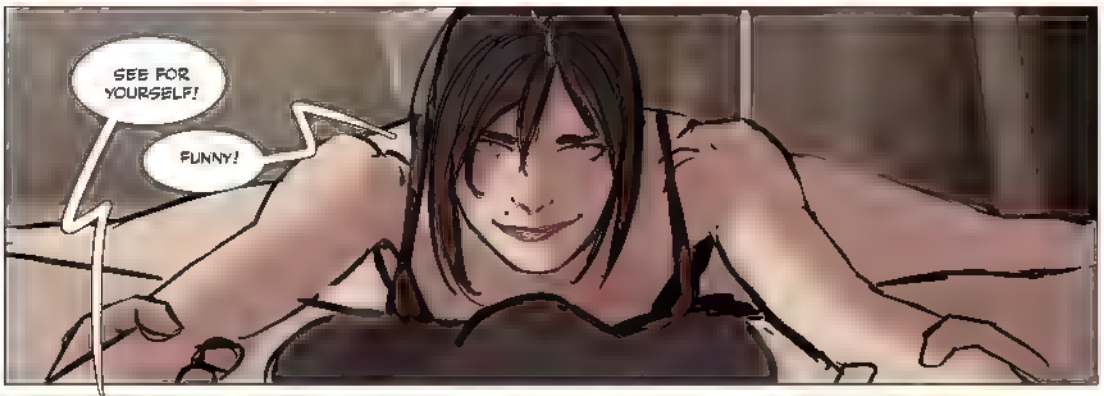

SO, WHAT ABOUT ALLY AND ME?
WHAT "ALIGNMENT" WOULD WE BE
IN OUR OWN FREEFALL, HOW CLOSE TO THE GROUND WOULD WE DARE TO GO BEFORE WE PULLED THAT CHORD
BEFORE THE WHOLE ATTIC INCIDENT WE PRETTY MUCH JUST DID WHAT FELT RIGHT
PLAYED IT BY EAR...
BUT THAT DAY WHEN THINGS WENT WRONG, WE STARTED THINKING ABOUT IT.
WE DIDN'T KNOW IT AT THE TIME, BUT THAT DAY WOULD END UP DEFINING WHAT KINDS OF DOMS WE WANTED TO BE

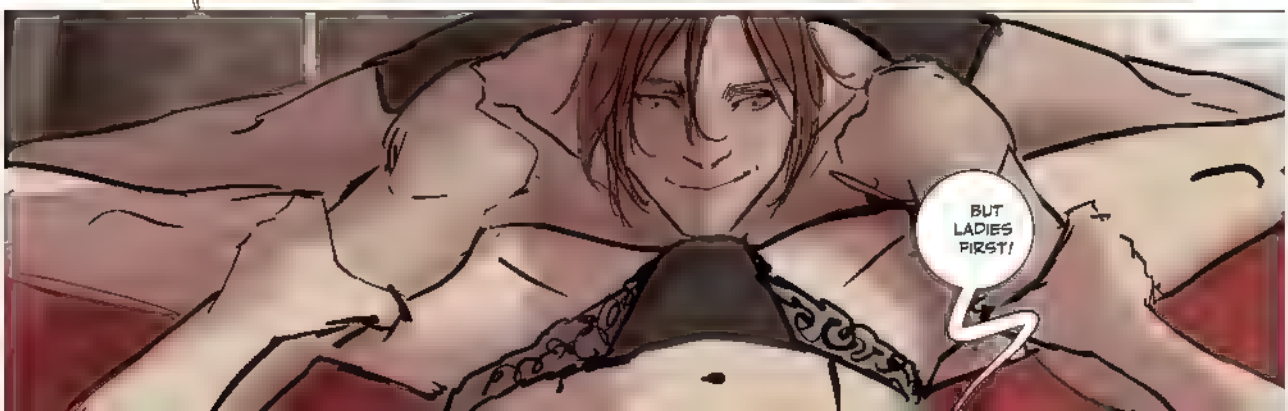
COME ON, HARDER, DON'T BE A WIMP!

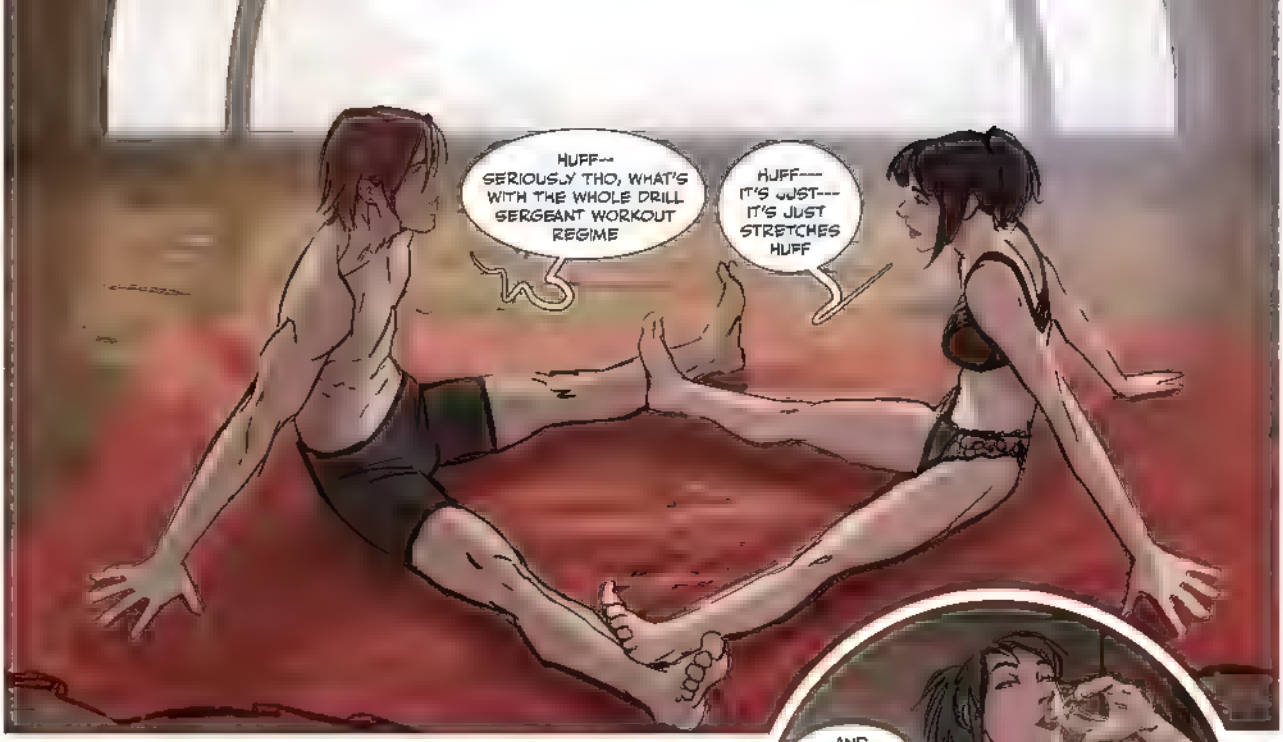
HEY, YOU'RE THE PROGRAMMER. I'M TRYING NOT TO SNAP YOUR BRITTLE TENDONS

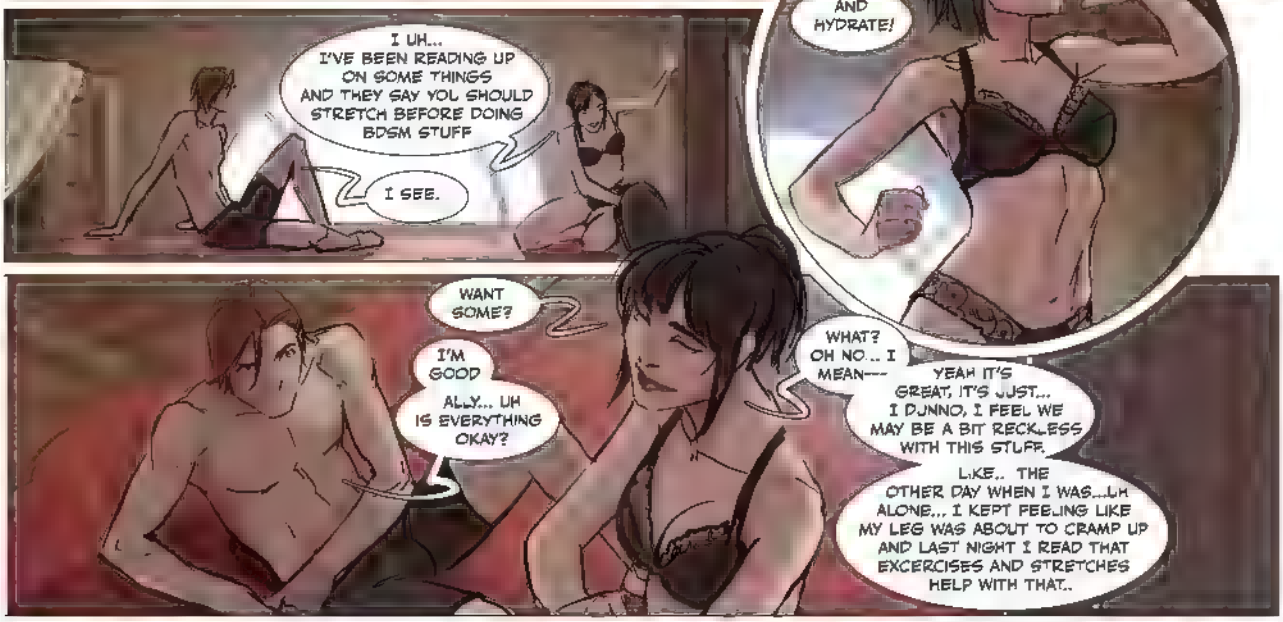

ME??? HUFF-- YOU LITERALLY SIT ON YOUR ASS IN THAT ANTIQUE PLACE MOST OF THE TIME POLISHING WOOD!

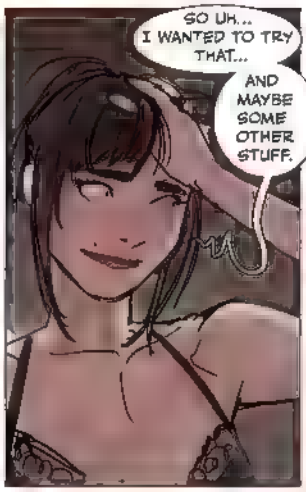

OH IT'S HARDER THAN YOU THINK!

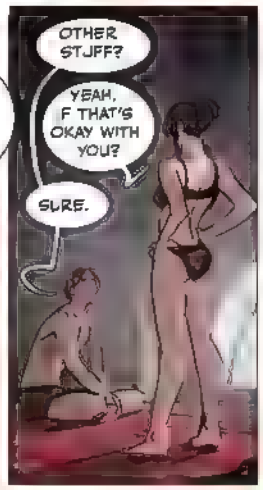

SEE FOR YOURSELF!
FUNNY!

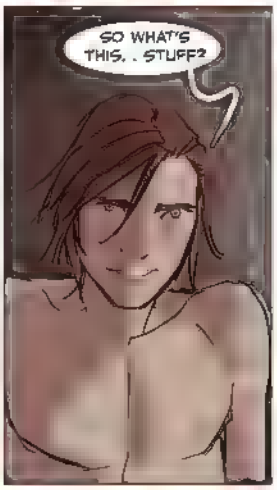

BUT LADIES FIRST!


HUFF-- SERIOUSLY THO, WHAT'S WITH THE WHOLE DRILL SERGEANT WORKOUT REGIME
HUFF--- IT'S JUST--- IT'S JUST STRETCHES HUFF


I UH... I'VE BEEN READING UP ON SOME THINGS AND THEY SAY YOU SHOULD STRETCH BEFORE DOING BDSM STUFF
I SEE.
AND HYDRATE!
WANT SOME?
I'M GOOD
ALLY... UH IS EVERYTHING OKAY?
WHAT? OH NO... I MEAN---
YEAH IT'S GREAT, IT'S JUST... I DUNNO, I FEEL WE MAY BE A BIT RECKLESS WITH THIS STUFF.
LIKE.. THE OTHER DAY WHEN I WAS...UH ALONE... I KEPT FEELING LIKE MY LEG WAS ABOUT TO CRAMP UP AND LAST NIGHT I READ THAT EXCERCISES AND STRETCHES HELP WITH THAT..


SO UH... I WANTED TO TRY THAT...
AND MAYBE SOME OTHER STUFF.


OTHER STUFF?
YEAH, IF THAT'S OKAY WITH YOU?
SURE.


SO WHAT'S THIS, . STUFF?

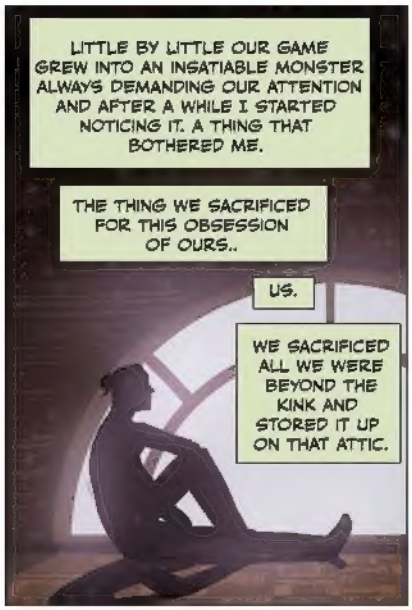
I MADE A LIST!

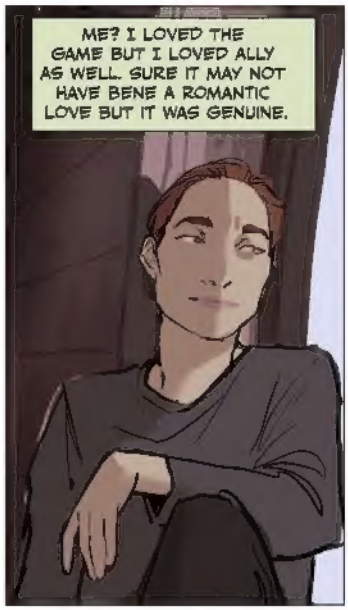
I FIRMLY BELIEVE THAT A LOT OF PEOPLE GET INTO BDSM BY SEEING IT SOMEWHERE AND THEN TRIAL AND ERRORING THIS SHIT UNTIL THEY EITHER GET BURNED BY IT, BORED OF IT, OR TAKE IT SERIOUSLY ENOUGH TO GO LOOKING FOR SOME ACTUAL REAL IN PERSON GUIDANCE.
THAT WASN'T AN OPTION FOR US BACK THEN, PRIMARILY BECAUSE THE VERY THOUGHT OF LOOKING FOR A BDSM CLUB OR LEARNING COURSES WOULD SEND US TO A GIGGLING FIT
IN OUR MOMENT OF NEED, ONCE AGAIN WE TURNED TO THAT LAST GREAT BASTION OF FREELY AVAILABLE INFORMATION...
THE INTERNET.
THE PLACE WHERE ANYONE WITH A KEYBOARD AND SOME FREETIME BECOMES AN EXPERT
WHERE "TRUST ME BRO" BECOMES A CREDENTIAL
AND FOR BETTER OR FOR WORSE, ALLY FOUND A LOT OF SELF APPOINTED EXPERTS THERE...
DAMN, YOU REALLY DID YOUR HOMEWORK ON THIS..
EEEH..
TECHNICALLY I DID THIS INSTEAD OF DOING MY HOMEWORK
IT'S FINE. I'LL CATCH UP ON THAT.

ANYWAYS LET'S GET TO IT.
AND TO IT WE GOT. IT WAS A LONG LIST OF TIPS, TRICKS AND ADVICE. SOME WERE GREAT, LIKE STRETCH PROPERLY BEFORE TRYING COMPLEX BONDAGE RIGS.
OR THE ONES ABOUT USING PROPER TOOLS FOR THE JOB TO REDUCE THE RISK OF INJURIES
DON'T USE REGULAR KITCHEN SCISSORS INSTEAD USE TRAUMA SHEARS?
THE FUCK ARE TRAUMA SHEARS?
TURNS OUR TRAUMA SHEARS ARE AWESOME SAFETY SCISSORS!
AND WEIRD LOOKING.
THEN OF COURSE THERE WERE THE QUESTIONABLE TIPS
AN ASPIR.N?
YEAH. BOTTOMBABE32 SWEARS BY IT, SAYS IT'S A BLOOD THINNER SO IT REDUCES THE RISK OF BLOOD CLOTS DURING LONGER INTENSE BONDAGE SESSIONS.
OKAY SO UH... UPDATE SPANKANDTANKS SAYS THAT ASPIRIN ACTUALLY INCREASES RISKS OF BRUISING WHEN DOING IMPACT PLAY
MMMHM... MAYBE YOU SHOULD HAVE CONSULTED WITH SPANKANDTANKS BEFORE YOU MADE MY ASS INTO A CONTEMPORTARY ART PIECE.
YEEEEAAAHH... SORRY.

AND THEN THERE WERE THE STRAIGHT UP NOPE ADVICE... LIKE THE HELPFUL LIST OF HOUSEHOLD BUTTPLAY ITEMS AND POSSIBLE LUBRICANTS.
SIGH..
SUNSTONE!
COWARD!
OR ALL THE WONDERFUL AND SUPER PRACTICAL IMPROVISED BONDAGE GEAR YOU CAN FIND ON A BUDGET
LIKE ZIPTIES!
YOU SURE ABOUT THIS?
TIGHT-PACKED SUSAN SAYS THEY FEEL AMAZING!
ZIP IT!
WELL?
MAN, FUCK TIGHT-PACKED SUSAN! THIS SHIT SUCKS!
SO YEAH. THE TIPS VARIED IN QUALITY, FOR SURE, BUT IN THE END WHAT MATTERED THE MOST WAS OUR ATTITUDE. THE DIRECTION WE CHOSE WE SET OUR LIMITS AND WE WOULD STICK BY THESE. SAFETY FIRST AND SAFETY ABOVE ALL THINGS. FUCK THE IMMERSION. THAT WAS US.

BUT THERE WAS AN UNFORSEEN SIDEFFECT TO THIS. OUR SESSIONS NOW INCLUDING LONGER SETUPS, WARMUPS STRETCHES, AND EVEN MORE AFTERCARE. THEY TOOK LONGER. DEMANDED MORE DEDICATION... MORE TIME.
MORE OF IT....
MORE OF US.
YEAH I'LL SET EVERYTHING UP.
OKAY?
HOW LATE?
FINE BUT THIS BETTER BE WORTH IT!


LITTLE BY LITTLE OUR GAME GREW INTO AN INSATIABLE MONSTER ALWAYS DEMANDING OUR ATTENTION AND AFTER A WHILE I STARTED NOTICING IT. A THING THAT BOTHERED ME.
THE THING WE SACRIFICED FOR THIS OBSESSION OF OURS..
US.
WE SACRIFICED ALL WE WERE BEYOND THE KINK AND STORED IT UP ON THAT ATTIC.


ME? I LOVED THE GAME BUT I LOVED ALLY AS WELL. SURE IT MAY NOT HAVE BENE A ROMANTIC LOVE BUT IT WAS GENUINE.

AND SURE, WHEN IT CAME TO MY MOST TREASURED MEMORIES WITH HER, SOME OF IT WAS THE KINK... OUR GAME...

BUT THE REST... IT WAS THE WINTER COFFEE

PAINTING UNDER A TREE...

THE SIMPLE TIMES OF SEEING A MOVIE TOGETHER...

STILL I'D BE LYING IF I SAID THAT BACK THEN THE SACRIFICES WEREN'T WORTH IT...
HELL, HER ENTHUSIASM ALONE WAS WORTH THE PRICE TO ME.
OH, THANK GOD, YOU'RE STILL HERE. SORRY I TRIED CATCHING A BUS BUT I MISSED IT SO...
IT'S FINE. I HAD STUFF TO DO ANYWAYS.
GREAT!
OKAY, SO, FIRST OFF, YOU KNOW HOW I WAS DOING THE SYSTEMS MAINTENANCE GIGS FOR A WHILE NOW.
SURE, I FULLY UNDERSTAND WHAT THAT IS. YOU TURN COMPUTERS ON AND OFF AGAIN, RIGHT?
FUCK OFF! BUT ALSO, SOMETIMES, YES.
ANYHOW I GOT LUCKY WITH A LOCAL BUSINESS HERE, AND RECOVERED SOME FILES AFTER A CRASH SO THEY PAID ME A NICE BONUS...
SO I WENT SHOPPING. HERE, THIS ONE'S FOR YOU!.
THIS IS NOT A PETSTORE COLLAR..
NO IT'S NOT. MOMMY GOT PAID! NOW, LET'S STRETCH AND THEN YOU'LL HELP ME PUT MY THING ON!

HEY, ALLY...
HUH?
I'VE BEEN THINKING... IT'S BEEN A WHILE SINCE WE SAW A MOVIE TOGETHER
I MEAN, IF YOU CAN GET YOUR PC UP HERE...
NOT PORN. I MEANT A MOVIE MOVIE.
LIKE... CINEMA. THIS SATURDAY?
OH, I'M ACTUALLY WORKING THE WHOLE WEEKEND
IT'S A WELL PAYING GIG BUT... YKNOW.. LONG HOURS.
SURE...
STILL, I'D SAY THE HOURS ARE WORTH IT!
SO? WHAT DO YOU THINK?
I WILL REFER YOU TO THE STANDING OVATION.

I DIDN'T PUSH THE ISSUE AT THE TIME. I BELIEVE YOU WROTE ABOUT IT IN YOUR STORY ONCE... THE FEAR OF RISKING THE GOOD ENOUGH FOR THE SAKE OF WHAT IF.
IN OUR CASE, THE "WHAT IF" WAS A MORE BALANCED FRIENDSHIP. ONE IN WHICH OUR OWN MONSTER DOESN'T DEVOUR US BOTH.
BUT THE "GOOD ENOUGH" WAS LOOKING DAMN FINE THAT DAY
AND SEEING HER LIKE THAT I WAS PERFECTLY CONTENT IN LETTING OUR GAME, OUR VERY OWN MONSTER DEVOUR US BOTH...